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The Mort Walker Interview

Beginning A New Series—Fantasy In The Comics!

Harry Grant Dart's *The Explorigator* from 1908—the complete sequence!

Also: The Bungle Family...Franklin Booth...Allen Saunders!

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HA HA! SUCH FUN! SUCH A SILLY BUSINESS. WELL ANYHOW GEORGE DEAR, WE DIDN'T, AS USUAL, GET MAD.
HA HA! IT WAS ALL SO FUNNY. HA HA! AND, AS YOU SAY, WE BOTH HELD OUR TEMPER.

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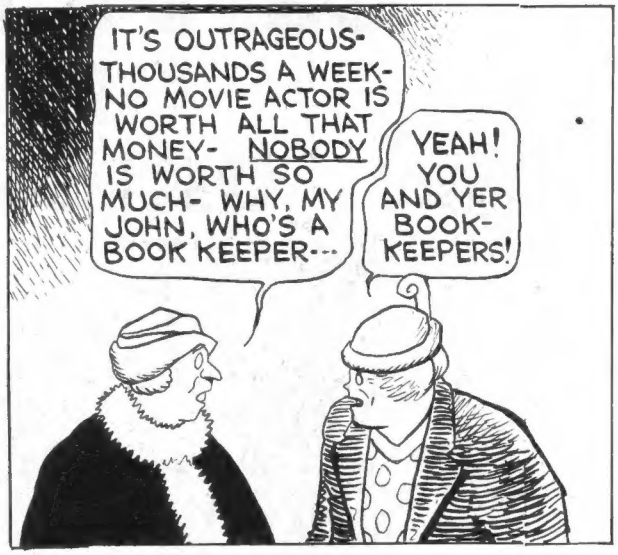
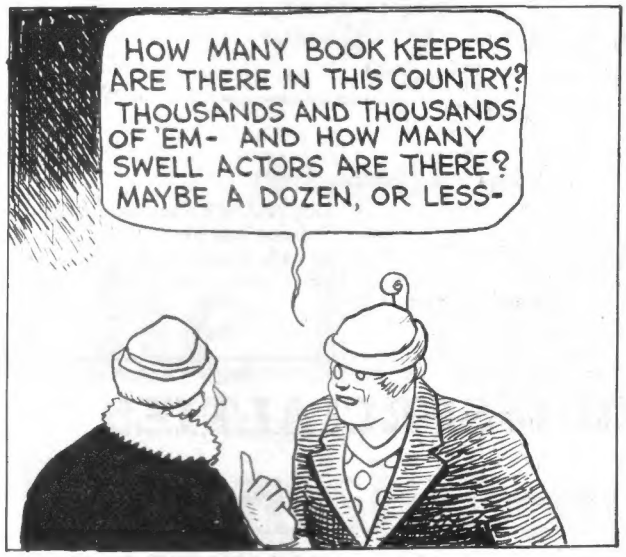
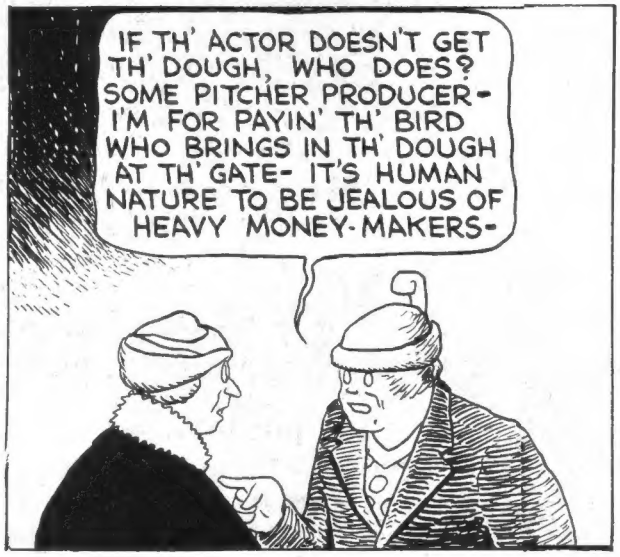
Guest Editorial

Harold Gray, creator of *Little Orphan Annie*, was arguably the cartoonist who injected the highest percentage of opinion and personal philosophy into his strip. The subject is open to question, with Al Capp, Walt Kelly, and Garry Trudeau prominent and willing challengers . . . and Gray himself thought he hardly put his toe into the waters of controversy! In any event, in this Sunday top strip from 1936, his Maw Green character editorializes not only on the fruits of the Free Enterprise system, but on the place of the cartoonist in society . . .


IT'S OUTRAGEOUS- THOUSANDS A WEEK- NO MOVIE ACTOR IS WORTH ALL THAT MONEY- NOBODY IS WORTH SO MUCH- WHY, MY JOHN, WHO'S A BOOK KEEPER---
YEAH! YOU AND YER BOOK-KEEPERS!


HOW MANY BOOK KEEPERS ARE THERE IN THIS COUNTRY? THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF 'EM- AND HOW MANY SWELL ACTORS ARE THERE? MAYBE A DOZEN, OR LESS-


IF TH' ACTOR DOESN'T GET TH' DOUGH, WHO DOES? SOME PITCHER PRODUCER- I'M FOR PAYIN' TH' BIRD WHO BRINGS IN TH' DOUGH AT TH' GATE- IT'S HUMAN NATURE TO BE JEALOUS OF HEAVY MONEY-MAKERS-

BALL PLAYERS- BOXERS- WRITERS- AND COMEDIANS- HOW MANY REAL FUNNY MEN ARE THERE? KIN YOUR JOHN PANIC A HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE IVERY DAY? IF A PERSON HAS IT, I'M FOR HIM COLLECTIN' IVERY DIME HE CAN GIT-
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.:
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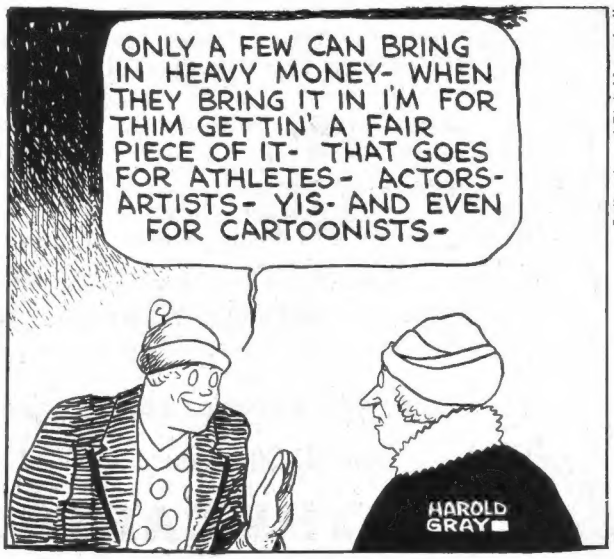
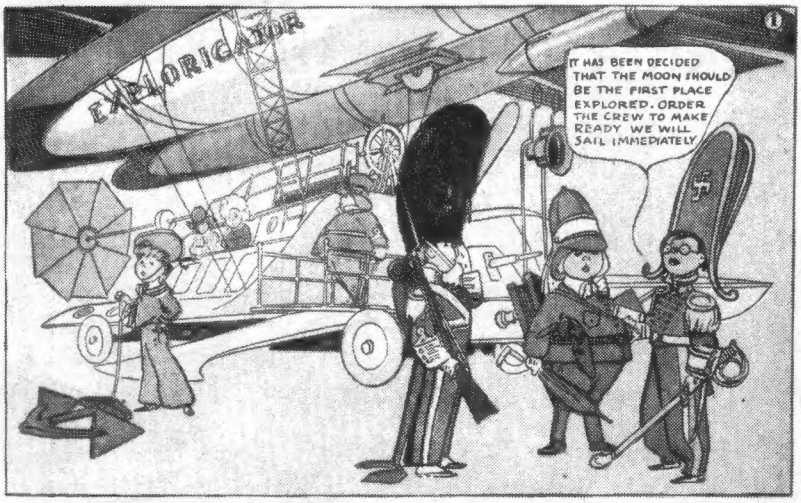

ONLY A FEW CAN BRING IN HEAVY MONEY- WHEN THEY BRING IT IN I'M FOR THIM GETTIN' A FAIR PIECE OF IT- THAT GOES FOR ATHLETES- ACTORS- ARTISTS- YIS- AND EVEN FOR CARTOONISTS-
HAROLD GRAY

Collection of Rick Marschall

fantasy in the comics


EXPLORIGATOR
IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT THE MOON SHOULD BE THE FIRST PLACE EXPLORED. ORDER THE CREW TO MAKE READY. WE WILL SAIL IMMEDIATELY

A Complete Fantasy Classic

The Explorigator: Dreamship of the Universe

Differences between strips of the turn of the century and today are many and glaring—the most obvious is the space cartoonists had to utilize; and the superior technology (better paper, better coloring) is readily apparent to one who beholds vintage Sunday supplements.

But there are other differences more subtle. One has to do with the profile of the average cartoonist; for instance, at the turn of the century there were many more female cartoonists than today. This curious fact will be documented and examined in a future issue of NEMO. Another anomaly is the great number of fantasy strips in the first years of this century—and their dearth today. A new series beginning in this issue of NEMO will resurrect many of the amazing, forgotten fantasy strips that were such a large part of comics' early history.

Inarguably the most famous and influential of the early fantasy creations was *Little Nemo*. A strip that seemed to be created in direct response was *The Explorigator* by Harry Grant Dart.

The Explorigator was the name of a fantastic airship that traversed the universe. Its adventures, therefore, were not dreamlike, as in *Nemo*, but the protagonists were children, the visual elan of the strip depended on grand architectural displays and bold colors . . . and it was drawn for the *Nemo*-N.Y. *Herald* competitor, the N.Y. *World*.

Dart was born in 1869 in Williamsport, Pa., and his first art job was to render crayon portraits for the National Crayon Company brochures. He drew for the *Boston Herald* in the mid-1890s, but it was when the N.Y. *World* arranged to send Dart to Cuba that his active newspaper-art career began. He sketched many important events (such as political conventions) in the days before photos were printed in newspapers. He rose to be art editor for the *World*, and it was from this position—and utilizing the techniques he employed in many free-lance cartoons for *Life*—that *The Explorigator* was conceived.

It proved to be a mini-series (whether by design we shall never know) and was syndicated to other cities than New York by the *World*. It lasted 14 weeks, overflowing with visual and imaginative delights. That it likely was a response to the unintentional gauntlet thrown down by Winsor McCay detracts not a bit from its maturity and appeal. The following portfolio is the complete run and represents the only reprinting since the strips' first appearance in 1908.

After *The Explorigator* Dart continued his prolific work; he was a mainstay of *Life* and *Judge* into the late '20s, and his cartoons always featured complicated perspectives, futuristic speculations, and incredible detail. Roy Krenkel once told me that Dart was his favorite artist, and it is easy to see how artists—and in fact anyone with a receptive imagination—could find Dart's skill irresistible.

He died in Laconia, N.H., in 1938, after a long career of creating fantastic cartoons and strips.

—Rick Marschall

THE FUNNY SIDE SECTION OF The World.
SUNDAY · MAY 3, 1908.
COPYRIGHT, 1908 PRESS PUBLISHING CO. NEW YORK WORLD.

TO FUNNY SIDE READERS:

Do we know that the Moon is inhabited or that it is made of green cheese? Do we know that Mars is inhabited or whether it is cracked? Do we know anything about Santa Claus Land or where Fourth of Julys are made? No! Decidedly, no!

Realizing our terrible ignorance and remembering how long it has been since Alice visited Wonderland, the FUNNY SIDE decided that something must be done. The ablest minds in the country were consulted and exhausted. As a result behold "The Explorigator."

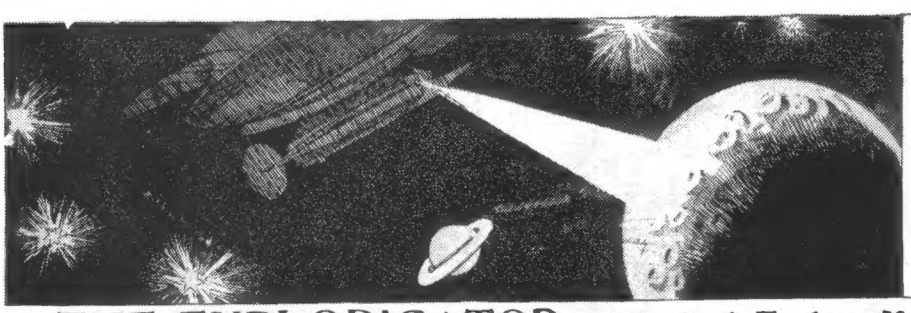
Neither brains nor money was spared in fitting out this wonderful airship. It has hot and cold water, dumbwaiters and a southern exposure. The crew has been carefully selected.

THE EXPLORIGATOR sails from this page to-day. It will go directly to the Moon, where the first series of explorations will be conducted.

THE EXPLORIGATOR—Admiral Fudge Sets Out to Explore the Moon.

EXPLORIGATOR
WITH YOUR KIND PERMISSION, WE WILL NOW PROCEED
ADMIRAL FUDGE.
Salutes me now, and all hoo-rye, for Admiral Fudge am I.
I'm not so old, but none so bold have ever sailed the sky.
I do not know just where we'll go on our aerial cruise,
But never mind, we're sure to find material for the news.
DETECTIVE RUBBERSOLE.
Hemh! hemh! 'tis I, that fellow fly, Detective Rubbersole.
No mystery is dark for me, and sleuthing is my goal.
The moon's green cheese, you know 'tis said, so if it's so or not
I'm going to find out for myself by tasting it while hot.
MAURICE MEZZENTOP.
Ye-ho for maurice salesmenop, a fearless navigator.
Though new to the sky no fears have I of sailing a flying ship.
But I will swear I'm up in the air on this here sort of trip.
NICHOLAS NOBODES.
I'm Captain Nicholas Nobodes, and I'm second here in rank.
I used to be a pirate free, and made 'em walk the plank.
With Captain Kidd I sailed, I did, but now reformed am I.
And never a purer pirate ever sailed around the sky.
GRENADIER SHIFT
Behold me here, a Grenadier, whose place should be on land.
Why I should ship for an airship trip I cannot understand.
Perhaps it is to be my "biz" to keep away the crowds.
And to see that the boat while it's afloat don't bump into the clouds.
TEDDY TYPEWRITER.
Now I'm the chap who has to rap the old typewriter key.
Yet I'll tell you that there are few I'd let dictate to me.
With eagle eye I'll scan the sky while we are up aflout,
And whenever I see that appeals to me of that I'll make a note.
AH FERGETTIT.
Me Ah Forgettit, allee same top-side cook Chinee.
Nice doggie stew, chop soony, too, we make for all, you see.
I keep 'em fat, me tallee dat, while sailing through the sky.
So all will say, thlee times a day, "Well, we are living high."
THE WORLD AINT SO BIG WHEN YE GET AWAY FROM IT.
I HOPE WE DON'T HIT A COMET.
PORT YOUR HELM! WE'RE NEAR THERE.
I WONDER IF I FORGET ANYTHING
THIS REMINDS ME OF THE NIGHT BEFORE WATERLOO.—
AYE, AYE SIR!
LET GO THE TOP GALLANT KITE STRING.
PLENTY WORK-E-E ALL THE SAME-E-E

All strips from the collection of Rick Marschall



THE FUNNY SIDE SECTION OF The World.

SUNDAY MAY 10, 1908.

COPYRIGHT 1908 PRESS PUBLISHING CO NEW YORK WORLD

THE EXPLORIGATOR—Admiral Fudge Meets the Man in the Moon.

EXPLORIGATOR

IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT THE MOON SHOULD BE THE FIRST PLACE EXPLORED. ORDER THE CREW TO MAKE READY WE WILL SAIL IMMEDIATELY.

IT SEEMS TO BE POPULATED BY A PEOPLE OF REFINEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE.

SURE, THERE'S THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY AND THE SKATIN' RINK.

SHOW ME YOUR TRANSFERS, AND REPEAT YOUR FATHERS MAIDEN NAME SOFTLY!

WILL YOU KINDLY DIRECT US TO THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON OR SOMEBODY WITH AUTHORITY?

TAKE HIS NUMBER

MUSN'T JOSTLE THE DUFFIODLES YET

DON'T SCRATCH THE VIOLETS

DON'T PEBBLE THE KATYDIDS

I THINK HIS FACE IS UPSIDE DOWN

I THINK THIS IS THE SOONEST ONE.

WOULD YOU ACCEPT A THIRD TERM?

YOUR MAJESTY, WE ASK YOUR PERMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE GREENCHEESE THEORY, AND LEARN THE SECRETS OF MOONBEAM MANUFACTURE.

YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION, BUT YOU MUST NOT REMOVE A SINGLE ARTICLE FROM THE REALM. FREDOLIVER, TAKE THE VISITORS TO THE MOONBEAM FACTORY.

AND REMEMBER SINGULAR IS SPECIAL.

D'HAN YE HUMAN CROQUET SET; OR I'LL RUN YE THROUGH.

A.S. Explorigator.

May 10, 1908.

Reached the Moon today. It really is green cheese but doesn't look it when you are there.

The Man in the Moon is King. Moon-men have big heads both ways.

There is a factory where moonbeams are made. The King told Admiral Fudge we could visit it if we didn't take anything away.

There are lots of ups and downs in the Moon. We are going down.

T. TYPEWRITER, Chronicler.

P.S. Admiral Fudge has ordered Grenadier to get a moonbeam at any cost. I foresee trouble.

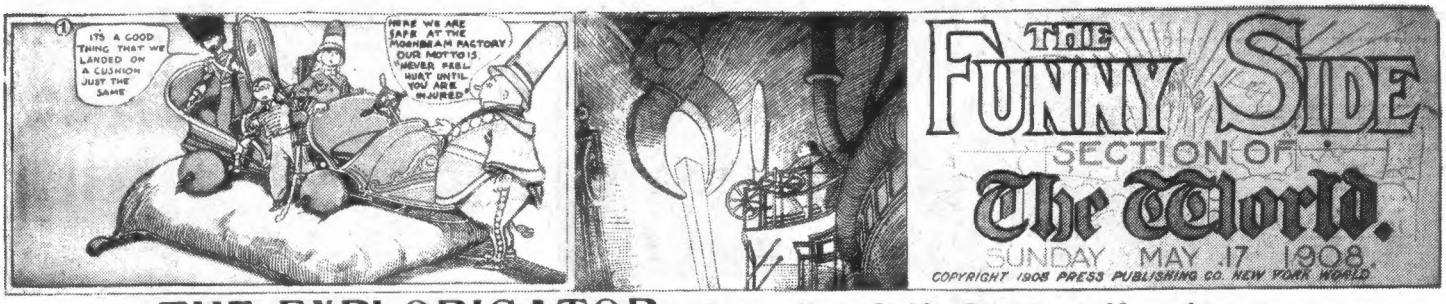
HOW FAR ARE WE FROM HERE?

GREEN CHEESE BOULEVARD

LET ME OFF! I'D RATHER WALK

TO THE MOONBEAM FACTORY.

HAVE PATIENCE WE'LL SOON BE THERE.


IT'S A GOOD THING THAT WE LANDED ON A CUSHION JUST THE SAME
HERE WE ARE SAFE AT THE MOONBEAM FACTORY. OUR MOTTO IS "NEVER FEEL HURT UNTIL YOU ARE INJURED."
THE FUNNY SIDE
SECTION OF
The World.
SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1908.
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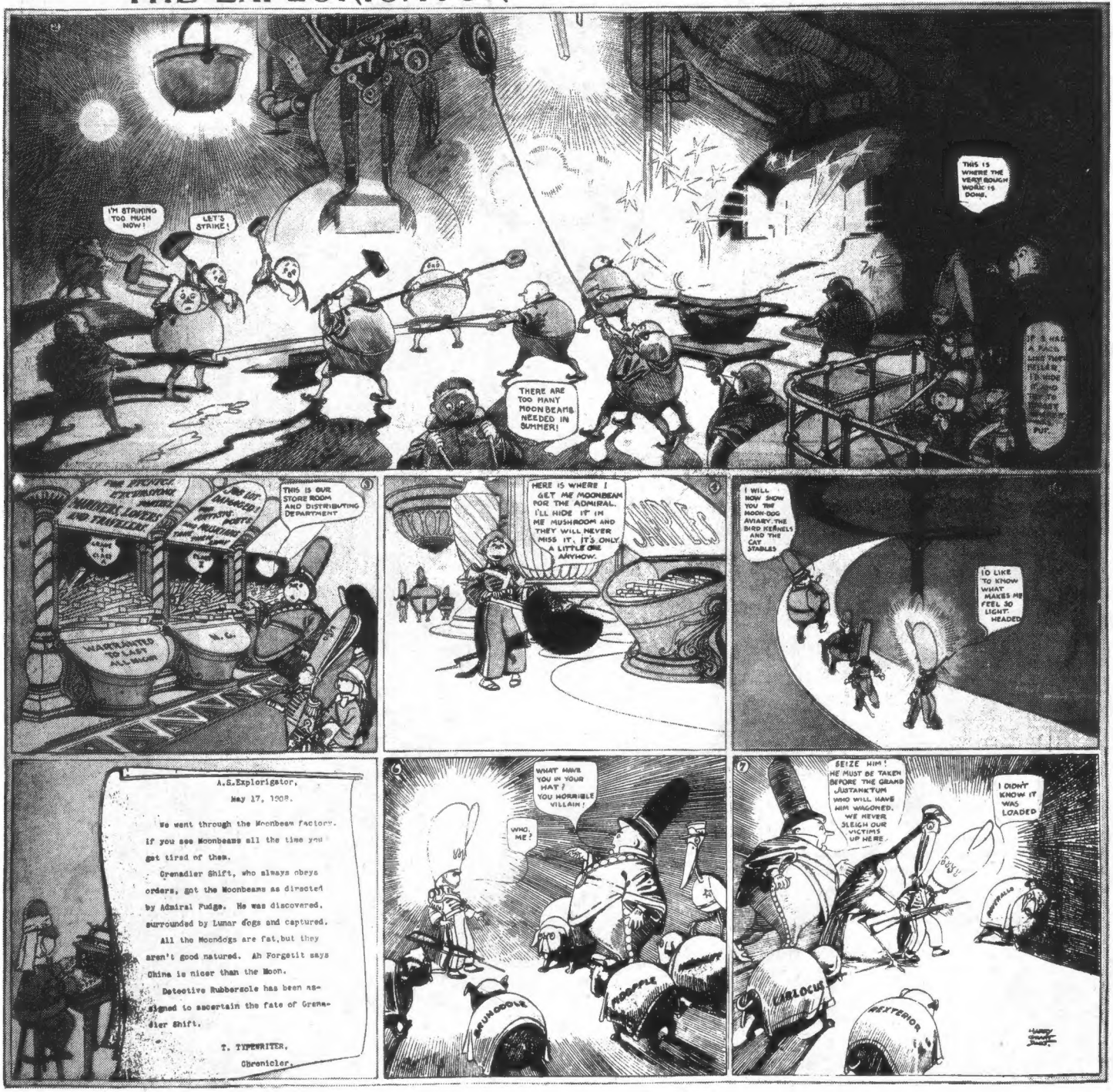
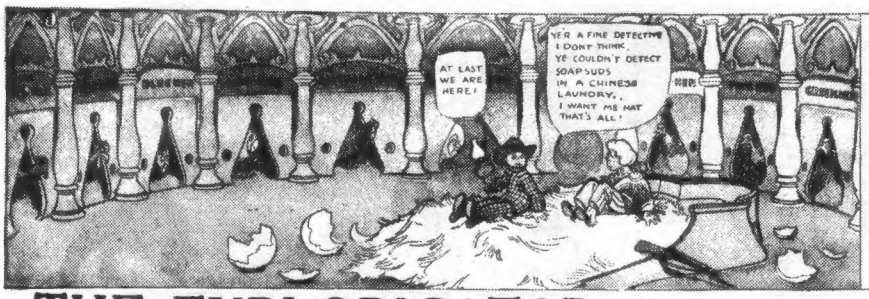
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Grenadier Shift Steals a Moonbeam.


I'M STRIKING TOO MUCH NOW!
LET'S STRIKE!
THERE ARE TOO MANY MOONBEAMS NEEDED IN SUMMER!
THIS IS WHERE THE VERY ROUGH WORK IS DONE.
THIS IS OUR STORE ROOM AND DISTRIBUTING DEPARTMENT
HERE IS WHERE I GET ME MOONBEAM FOR THE ADMIRAL. I'LL HIDE IT IN ME MUSHROOM AND THEY WILL NEVER MISS IT. IT'S ONLY A LITTLE ONE ANYHOW.
I WILL NOW SHOW YOU THE MOON-DOG AVIARY, THE BIRD KENNELS AND THE CAT STABLES
I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT MAKES ME FEEL SO LIGHT-HEADED
A.S.Explorigator,
May 17, 1908.
We went through the Moonbeam factory. If you see Moonbeams all the time you get tired of them.
Grenadier Shift, who always obeys orders, got the Moonbeams as directed by Admiral Fudge. He was discovered, surrounded by Lunar dogs and captured.
All the Moondogs are fat, but they aren't good natured. Ah Forgetit says China is nicer than the Moon.
Detective Rubbersole has been assigned to ascertain the fate of Grenadier Shift.
T. TYPEWRITER,
Chronicler.
WHAT HAVE YOU IN YOUR HAT? YOU HORRIBLE VILLAIN!
WHO, ME?
BRUMDOODLE
FIDDOODLE
SEIZE HIM! HE MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE THE GRAND JUSTANKTUM WHO WILL HAVE HIM WAGONED. WE NEVER SLEIGH OUR VICTIMS UP HERE.
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS LOADED
CARLOCKS
WEXTERIOR
WHIFFALLS

THIS IS THE HIGH COURT OF SECIAL SPESSHUN. YOU ARE CHARGED WITH MOONBEAM STEALING AND WILL BE TRIED AT ONCE
THE FUNNY SIDE
SECTION OF
The World.
SUNDAY MAY 24, 1908
COPYRIGHT 1908 PRESS PUBLISHING CO. NEW YORK WORLD
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Grenadier Shift Loses His Hat.
THE GENTLEMEN IN THE JURY BASKET FIND THE PRISONERS HAT GUILTY IN THE 33RD DEGREE, OF ADDING A MOONBEAM TO ESCAPE FROM THE REALM, I HEREWITH SENTENCE IT TO BE REHATCHED BY THE PLAID HEN AT THE EGG SANITARIUM.
GIVE ME ME HAT! DO YE HEAR? I WANT ME HAT!
THE ORDER OF THE COURT MUST BE CARRIED OUT
666 NO ID
LET'S GO AWAY FROM HERE. I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE ANYMORE
RUBBERSOLE THE DETECTIVE WILL FIND YOUR HAT. I WILL ORDER HIM TO PROCEED AT ONCE
NAPOLEON GAVE ME THAT LID AND I DON'T MOVE 'TIL I GET IT. I WANT ME HAT!
I DON'T CARE NOTHIN' ABOUT THAT. I WANT ME HAT. THAT'S ALL. I WANT ME HAT!
AH HA! METHINKS I DETECT A CLEW! LEAVE IT ALL TO OLD SURETHING RUBBERSOLE, HE WILL FIND YOUR BONNET.
YOUR HAT IS SOMEWHERE WITHIN THOSE WALLS!
WELL, I WANT ME HAT!
U.S. Explorigator.
May 24,1908.
Its worse than ever, we have discovered nothing but trouble this week. The Grenadiers hat is the cause of it all. To hear him talk you would think that all this expedition was designed for war to keep track of his hat. Ah Forgetit says that if he knew what it was going to be like he would have stayed in China.
However the Grenadiers hat was ordered to be re-hatched and Rubbersole the detective has been ordered to detect it. It is getting late and he and the Grenadier have not returned. We are getting worried much. Will tell you what happened next week
T. Typewriter
Chronicler.
WHEN IT COMES TO PLAIN AND FANCY DETECTIVE WORK, I WONDER IF ANYBODY THINKS THEY HAVE ANYTHING ON LITTLE REGGIE RUBBERSOLE THE—
JUST PRESS THE BUTTON, WE DO EVERYTHING ELSE
I'LL GET ME HAT OR THERE WILL BE TROUBLE IN THIS HIN COOP, I'E CAN—
FOILED!


AT LAST WE ARE HERE!
YE'R A FINE DETECTIVE I DONT THINK. YE COULDN'T DETECT SOAPSUDS IN A CHINESE LAUNDRY. I WANT ME HAT THAT'S ALL!

THE FUNNY SIDE OF THE SECTION The World.
SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1908
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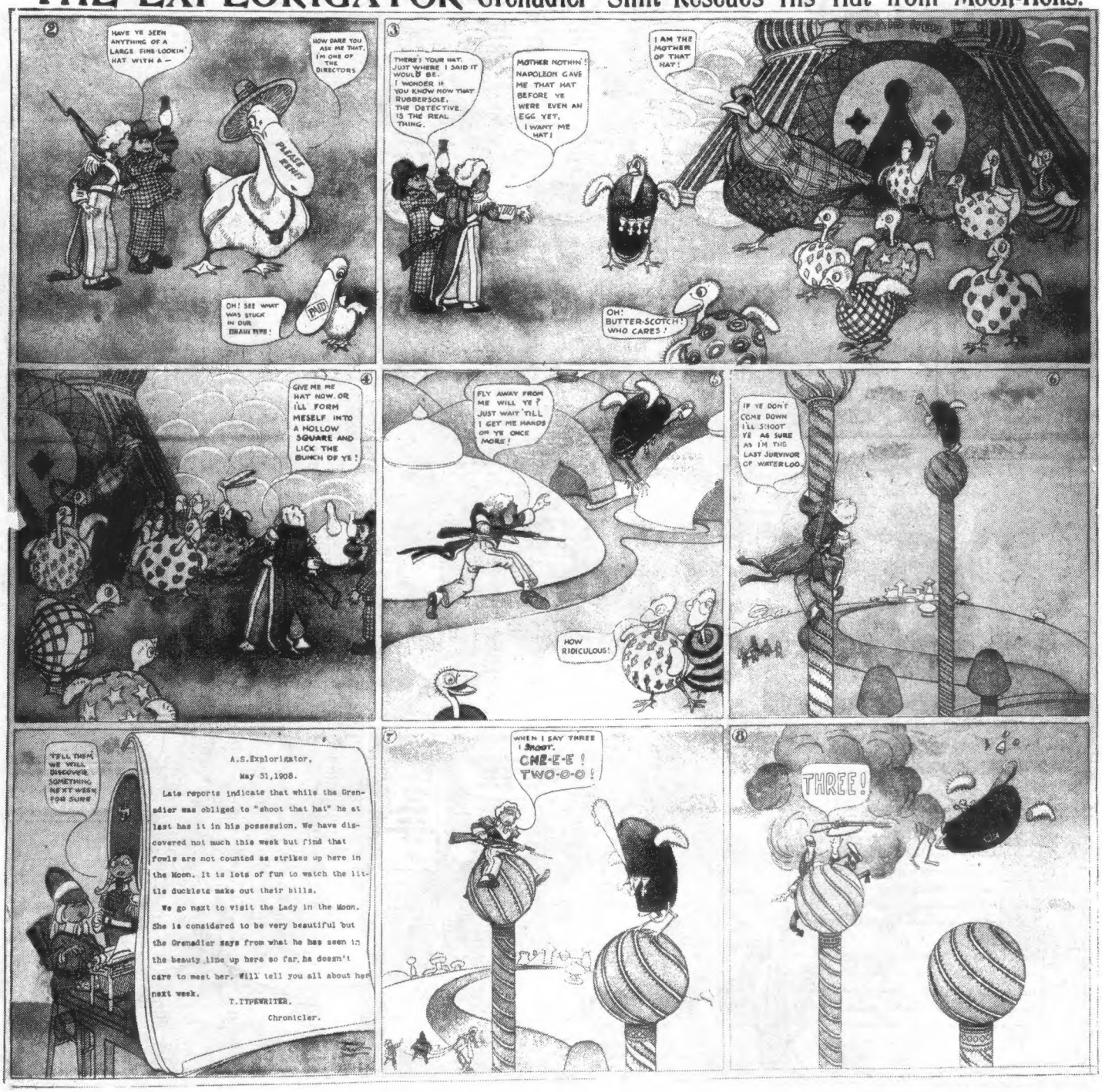
THE EXPLORIGATOR=Grenadier Shift Rescues His Hat from Moon-Hens.


2
HAVE YE SEEN ANYTHING OF A LARGE FINE LOOKIN' HAT WITH A —
HOW DARE YOU ASK ME THAT. I'M ONE OF THE DIRECTORS
PLEASE DEPART
OH! SEE WHAT WAS STUCK IN OUR DRAW BRIDGE!
PAID
3
THERE! YOUR HAT. JUST WHERE I SAID IT WOULD BE. I WONDER IF YOU KNOW NOW THAT RUBBERSOLE, THE DETECTIVE IS THE REAL THING.
MOTHER NOTHIN! NAPOLEON GAVE ME THAT HAT BEFORE YE WERE EVEN AN EGG YET, I WANT ME HAT!
I AM THE MOTHER OF THAT HAT!
OH! BUTTER-SCOTCH! WHO CARES!
4
GIVE ME ME HAT NOW OR I'LL FORM MESELF INTO A HOLLOW SQUARE AND LICK THE BUNCH OF YE!
5
FLY AWAY FROM ME WILL YE? JUST WAIT 'TILL I GET ME HANDS ON YE ONCE MORE!
HOW RIDICULOUS!
6
IF YE DON'T COME DOWN I'LL SHOOT YE AS SURE AS I'M THE LAST SURVIVOR OF WATERLOO.
TELL THEM WE WILL DISCOVER SOMETHING NEXT WEEK FOR SURE
A.S.Explorigator,
May 31,1908.
Late reports indicate that while the Grenadier was obliged to "shoot that hat" he at last has it in his possession. We have discovered not much this week but find that fowls are not counted as strikes up here in the Moon. It is lots of fun to watch the little ducklets make out their bills.
We go next to visit the Lady in the Moon. She is considered to be very beautiful but the Grenadier says from what he has seen in the beauty line up here so far, he doesn't care to meet her. Will tell you all about her next week.
T.TYPEWRITER.
Chronicler.
7
WHEN I SAY THREE I SHOOT. ONE-E-E! TWO-O-O!
8
THREE!

ROYAL HUNTING HOUSE
I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I, RUBBERSOLE THE DETECTIVE, HADN'T GONE AND GOT THIS BLANKET TO CATCH YOU IN
IT'S MY HAT ALL RIGHT. BUT IT'S GOT A HORRIBLE LEAK IN ITS BUTLERS PANTRY !
NEVER MIND YOUR HAT, WE MUST HURRY TO THE PALACE OF THE LADY IN THE MOON

THE FUNNY SIDE
SECTION OF
The World.
SUNDAY JUNE 7 1908
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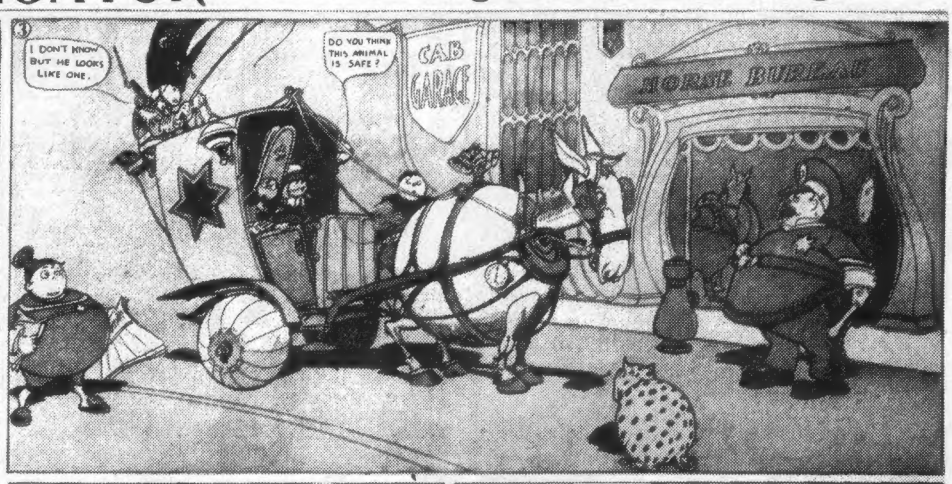
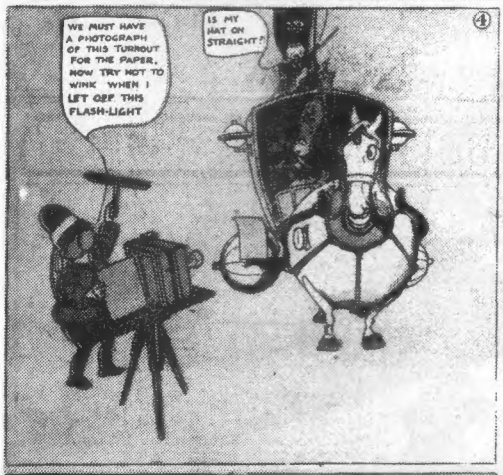
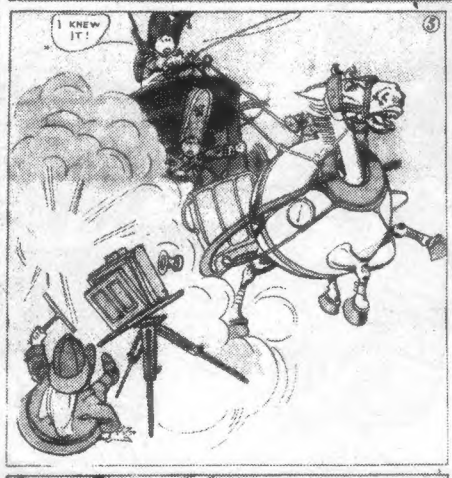
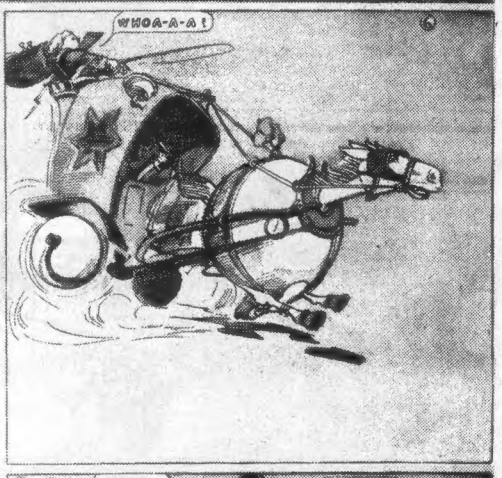
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Admiral Fudge Takes a Taxinag.

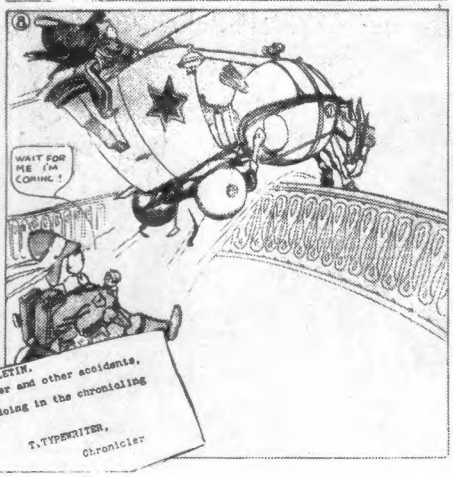
I SUPPOSE IT CAN BE PATCHED
CAN YOU DIRECT US TO THE PALACE OF THE LADY IN THE MOON ?
OF COURSE I CAN. HIRE A TAXINAG. IT WILL TAKE YOU THERE IN A JIFFY.

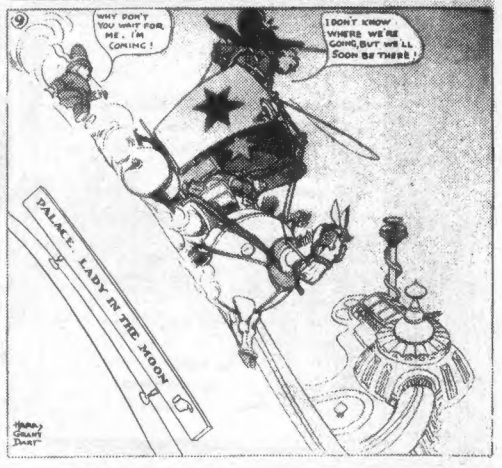


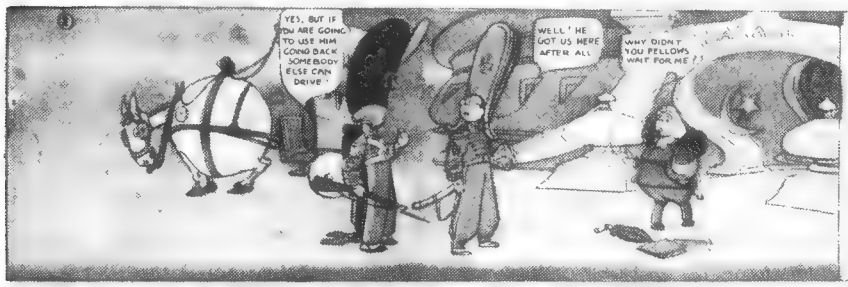

WE MUST HAVE A PHOTOGRAPH OF THIS TURNOUT FOR THE PAPER. NOW TRY NOT TO WINK WHEN I LET OFF THIS FLASH-LIGHT
IS MY HAT ON STRAIGHT ?






WAIT FOR ME I'M COMING !
BULLETIN.
Owing to the Grenadier and other accidents, there will be nothing doing in the chronicling line this week.
T.TYPEWRITER,
Chronicler




YES, BUT IF YOU ARE GOING TO USE HIM GOING BACK SOMEBODY ELSE CAN DRIVE
WELL! HE GOT US HERE AFTER ALL
WHY DIDN'T YOU FELLOWS WAIT FOR ME?

THE FUNNY SIDE SECTION OF The World. SUNDAY JUNE 14 1908.

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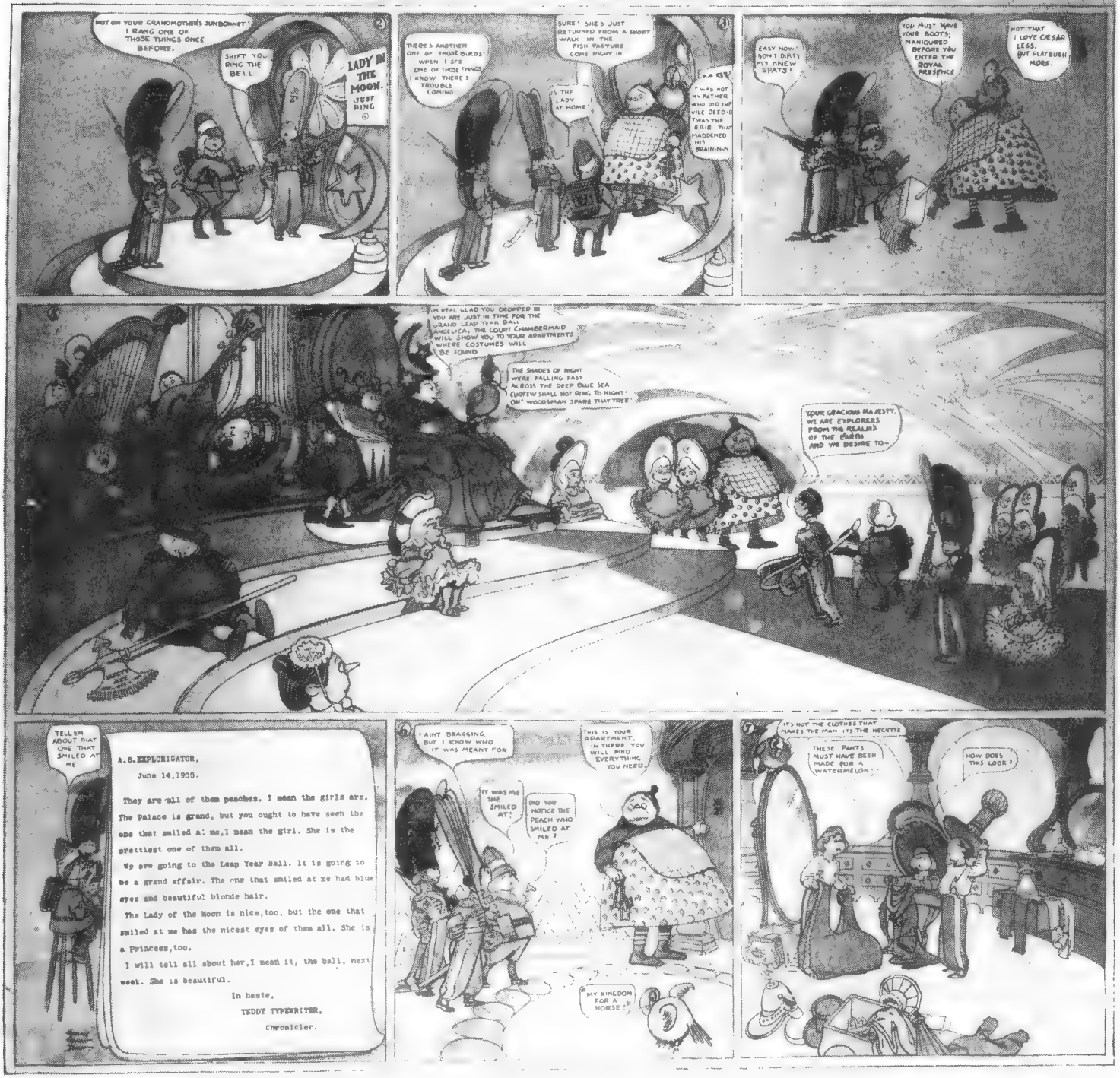
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Admiral Fudge Visits the Moon Lady.


NOT ON YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S SUNBONNET! I RANG ONE OF THOSE THINGS ONCE BEFORE.
SHIFT YOU RING THE BELL
LADY IN THE MOON. JUST RING.
THERE'S ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BIRDS! WHEN I SEE ONE OF THOSE THINGS I KNOW THERE'S TROUBLE COMING
SURE! SHE'S JUST RETURNED FROM A SHORT WALK IN THE FISH PASTURE COME RIGHT IN
IS THE LADY AT HOME?
IT WAS NOT MY FATHER WHO DID THE VILE DEED-IT WAS THE ERIE THAT MADDENED HIS BRAIN-PAN
EASY NOW! DON'T DIRTY MY KNEW SPATS!
YOU MUST HAVE YOUR BOOTS MANICURED BEFORE YOU ENTER THE ROYAL PRESENCE
NOT THAT I LOVE CAESAR LESS, BUT FLATBUSH MORE.
I'M REAL GLAD YOU DROPPED IN YOU ARE JUST IN TIME FOR THE GRAND LEAP YEAR BALL ANGELICA, THE COURT CHAMBERMAID WILL SHOW YOU TO YOUR APARTMENTS WHERE COSTUMES WILL BE FOUND
THE SHADES OF NIGHT WERE FALLING FAST ACROSS THE DEEP BLUE SEA CURFEW SHALL NOT RING TO NIGHT' OH! WOODSMAN SPARE THAT TREE!
YOUR GRACIOUS MAJESTY, WE ARE EXPLORERS FROM THE REALMS OF THE EARTH AND WE DESIRE TO-
TELL 'EM ABOUT THAT ONE THAT SMILED AT ME
A.G. EXPLORIGATOR,
June 14,1908.
They are all of them peaches. I mean the girls are. The Palace is grand, but you ought to have seen the one that smiled at me,I mean the girl. She is the prettiest one of them all.
We are going to the Leap Year Ball. It is going to be a grand affair. The one that smiled at me had blue eyes and beautiful blonde hair.
The Lady of the Moon is nice,too, but the one that smiled at me has the nicest eyes of them all. She is a Princess,too.
I will tell all about her,I mean it, the ball, next week. She is beautiful.
In haste,
TEDDY TYPEWRITER,
Chronicler.
I AIN'T BRAGGING. BUT I KNOW WHO IT WAS MEANT FOR
IT WAS ME SHE SMILED AT!
DID YOU NOTICE THE PEACH WHO SMILED AT ME?
THIS IS YOUR APARTMENT. IN THERE YOU WILL FIND EVERYTHING YOU NEED.
MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE!
IT'S NOT THE CLOTHES THAT MAKES THE MAN IT'S THE NECKTIE
THESE PANTS MUST HAVE BEEN MADE FOR A WATERMELON!
HOW DOES THIS LOOK?

I USED TO CARRY ONE OF THESE TOAD ASSASSINATORS WHEN I WAS WITH HANNIBAL
THESE TROUSERS DON'T FEEL RIGHT BUT THEY SEEM TO BE THE STYLE UP HERE
THIS OUGHT TO HOLD THEM A WHILE

THE FUNNY SIDE
SECTION OF
The World.
SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1908.

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THE EXPLORIGATOR—Ahfergettit Goes to The Moon-Queen's Party

I WONDER WHO LET THAT IN
OH! ISN'T HE HANDSOME! WHAT A SWEET COSTUME
OH HOW LOVELY! ISN'T HE GRAND! PRESENT HIM AT ONCE.
TELL THE CAPTAIN TO GO CHASE HIMSELF WE'RE BUSY.
THE CLAPTAIN HE SAY YOU COME-E RIGHT-E BACK. OR HE GO AND BE PLIRATE.
ISN'T HE JUST TOO LOVELY FOR ANYTHING! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL FACE!
IF YOU WILL ONLY COME MY LOVE AND AND WALTZ WITH ME-E-E

DID YOU EVER SEE SUCH BEAUTIFUL EYES!
AND SUCH A LOVELY COMPLEXION!
I SPEAK FOR HIM.
HE IS MINE!
I BEG YOUR PARDON, BUT I SAW HIM FIRST!
WON'T YOU COME AND DANCE WITH ME?
WHAT AN ODD SWORD HE CARRIES.
SOME FRIEND OF YOURS I PRESUME!
WELL! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT!
LET'S GO AWAY FROM HERE. I HATE THIS PLACE.
SHUT UP! YE CANTALOUPE I'M IN NO HUMOR TO BE TRIFLED WITH.

WHAT'S YOUR HURRY? HERE'S YOUR HAT.
YOUR THINGS ARE READY FOR YOU WHEN YOU WANT TO GO.
WE DON'T WANT TO STAY AT YOUR OLD PARTY ANYHOW.
I NEVER WAS INSULTED LIKE THIS BEFORE!

A.S.Explorigator.

June 21, 1908.

We did not have a nice time at all at the party. The Princesses do not know a sword from a frying pan. The Chinaman had to butt in and the Admiral has discharged him for being fresh and forward.

One of the Princesses asked the Grenadier what the Chinaman's name was.

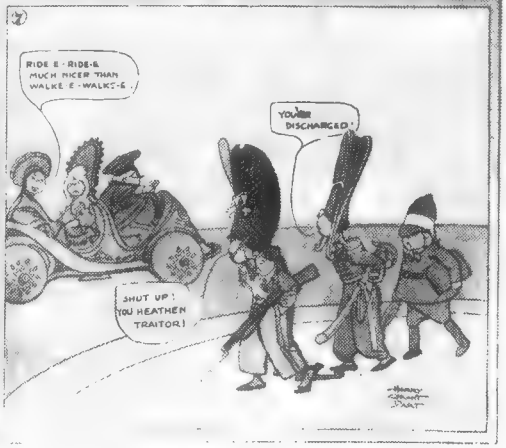
"Ahfergettit," he replied.

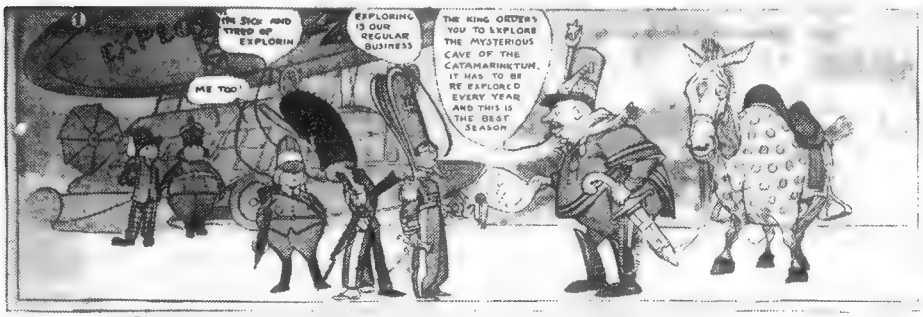
"How dare you speak to a princess like that," she said indignantly, and he said "Oh,mush", and we got mad and came away.

Next week we are going to discover some thing useful. We do not know what it is yet.

I.TYPEWRITER,
Chronicler.

IF WE HAD YOU ON EARTH WE'D SELL YOU TO A CIRCUS FOR A HUMAN HIPPOPOTAMUS.
OH! SEE WHO'S GOING AWAY FROM HERE
COME AGAIN SOME TIME WHEN THERE'S NOBODY AT HOME
DON'T NOTICE ME.
CAT!




I'M SICK AND TIRED OF EXPLORIN
ME TOO!
EXPLORING IS OUR REGULAR BUSINESS
THE KING ORDERS YOU TO EXPLORE THE MYSTERIOUS CAVE OF THE CATAMARINKTUM. IT HAS TO BE RE EXPLORED EVERY YEAR AND THIS IS THE BEST SEASON

THE FUNNY SIDE SECTION OF The World.
SUNDAY JULY 5 1908
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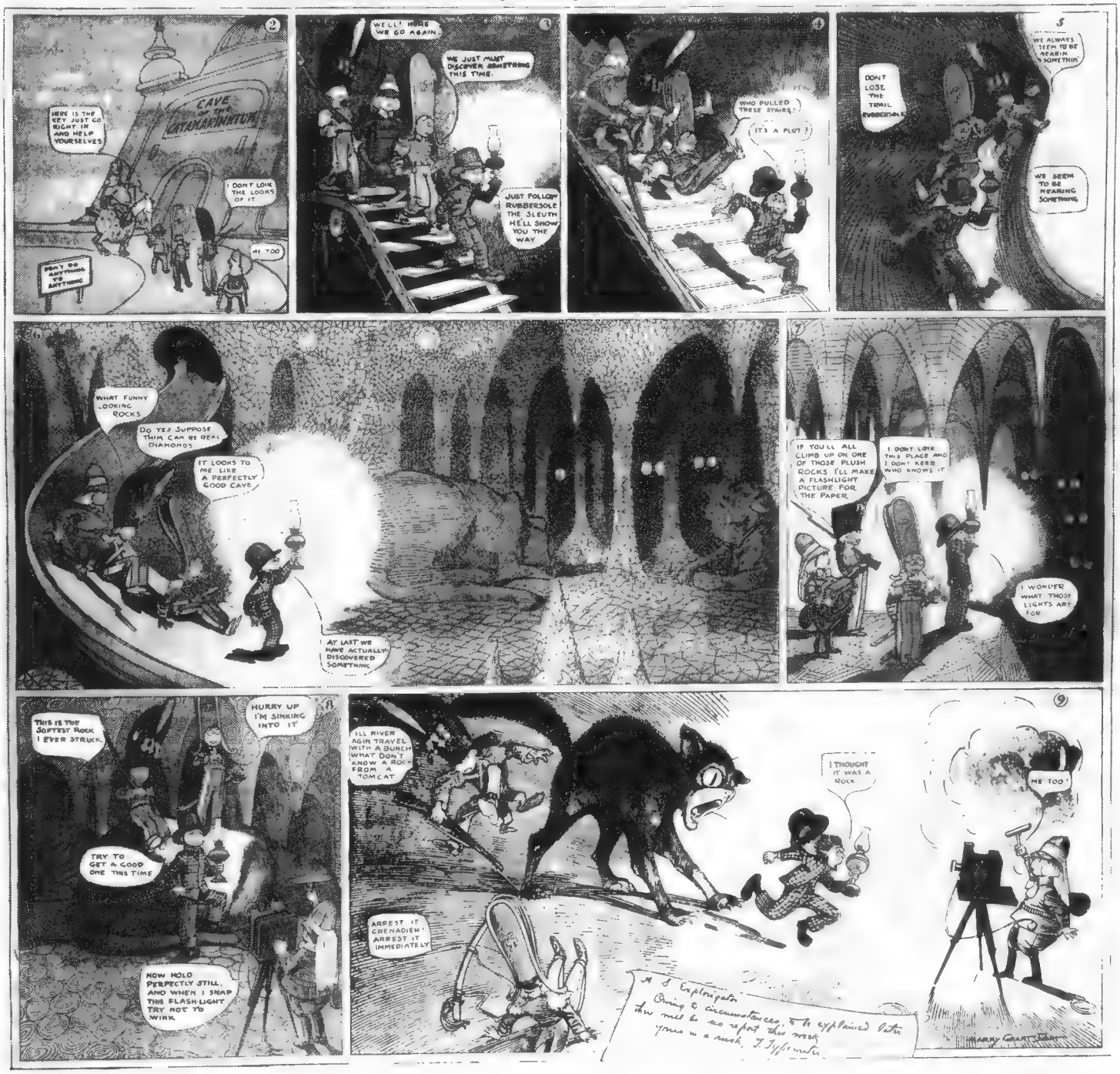
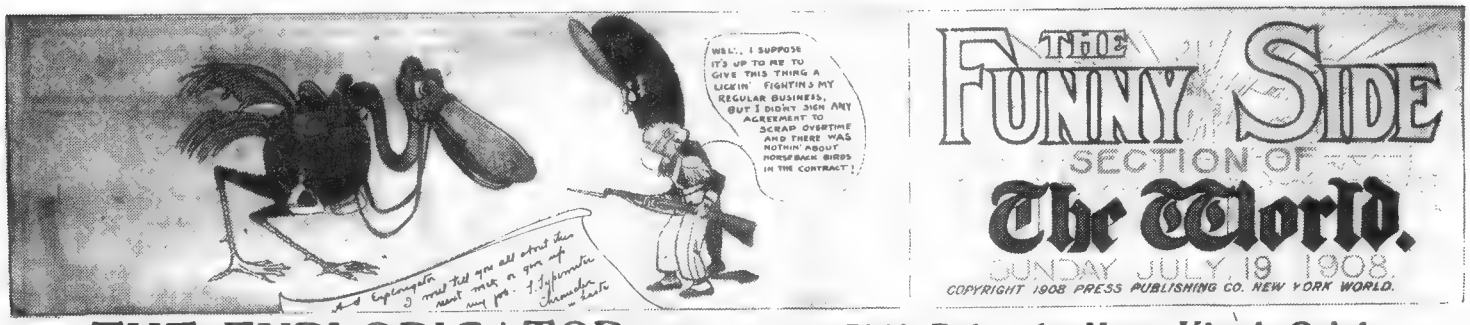
THE EXPLORIGATOR—*They Visit Catamarinktum Cave in the Moon.*


2
HERE IS THE KEY JUST GO RIGHT IN AND HELP YOURSELVES
CAVE OF THE CATAMARINKTUM
I DONT LOIK THE LOOKS OF IT
HI TOO
MAY DO ANYTHING TO ANYTHING
3
WELL HERE WE GO AGAIN.
WE JUST MUST DISCOVER SOMETHING THIS TIME.
JUST FOLLOW RUBBERSOLE THE SLEUTH HE'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY
4
WHO PULLED THESE STAIRS?
IT'S A PLOT!
5
WE ALWAYS SEEM TO BE NEARIN SOMETHIN
DONT LOSE THE TRAIL RUBBERSOLE
WE SEEM TO BE NEARING SOMETHING
6
WHAT FUNNY LOOKING ROCKS
DO YEZ SUPPOSE THIM CAN BE REAL DIAMONDS
IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE A PERFECTLY GOOD CAVE
AT LAST WE HAVE ACTUALLY DISCOVERED SOMETHING
7
IF YOU'LL ALL CLIMB UP ON ONE OF THOSE PLUSH ROCKS I'LL MAKE A FLASHLIGHT PICTURE FOR THE PAPER
I DONT LOIK THIS PLACE AND I DONT KERR WHO KNOWS IT
I WONDER WHAT THOSE LIGHTS ARE FOR
8
THIS IS THE SOFTEST ROCK I EVER STRUCK.
HURRY UP I'M SINKING INTO IT
TRY TO GET A GOOD ONE THIS TIME
NOW HOLD PERFECTLY STILL, AND WHEN I SNAP THE FLASH-LIGHT TRY NOT TO WINK
I'LL NIVER AGIN TRAVEL WITH A BUNCH WHAT DON'T KNOW A ROCK FROM A TOMCAT
I THOUGHT IT WAS A ROCK
ARREST IT GRENADIER! ARREST IT IMMEDIATELY
9
ME TOO!
HARRY GRANT MELVILLE

Funny Side of the World JULY 12 1908
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Grenadier Shift Escapes From the Moon Cats.
SAVE YOURSELF, I'LL STAY HERE AND DIE FOR MY COUNTRY! IT ISN'T THE FIRST TIME I'VE DONE IT, EITHER!
I GUESS I'D BETTER GET THIS ONE HE'LL BE BETTER EXERCISE FOR THE CHILDREN AND WILL BE MORE AMUSING.
A. B. Explorigator too occupied with other matters to write this week. Teddy Typewriter Chronicler.
WON'T THE CHILDREN BE DELIGHTED WHEN THEY SEE THIS!
WHY IS IT THAT I'M ALWAYS IT.
HERE'S WHERE I GET OFF!
THERE WERE FOUR OF THEM, CHILDREN, BUT THIS IS THE ONLY ONE I COULD CATCH
OH! THANK YOU MAMA FOR BRINGING US SUCH A NICE TOY!
I'M A SOLDIER I AM. AND I DIDN'T SURVIVE THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO TO BECOME A PLAYTHING FOR NO ELEPHANT KITTENS!
HE LOOKS PERFECTLY GOOD TO ME!
OH! GLADNESS!
I'LL BET HE'LL BE AS MUCH FUN AS A MOUSE!
MILK FOR KITTENS ONLY
WHEN HE EATEN HIS ONE FOR IN AFRAID HE WON'T LAST!
LET ME HAVE A SWAT AT 'IM!
STOP YOUR FOOLIN' NOW, OR SOMEBODY'LL GET HURT!
AIN'T HE JUST LOADS OF FUN!
OH! DEAR! THAT'S FUNNY ENOUGH TO MAKE EVEN A DOG LAUGH!
NOW LOOK WHAT YOU DID!
HOW WAS THAT FOR A SHOT!
AFTER YOU FINISH PLAYING WITH IT CHILDREN, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO EAT IT!
I SHALL DIE LAUGHING
ISN'T HE JUST A SCREAM!
ISN'T HE FIERCE!
WHILE YOUR TEACHIN' 'IM HOW TO EAT, I'M A GIVIN' A DEMONSTRATION OF HOW I LICKED TWO FRENCH GRENADIERS SINGLE HANDED AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO!
I WISH COUSIN MARIA COULD HAVE BEEN HERE TO SEE IT!
WOULDN'T THAT SNAP YOUR G STRING
I JUST KNOW I SHALL DIE LAUGHING
FIRST I BATTED A FEW OF 'EM OVER THEIR BRAIN CAGES LIKE THIS —
WE WERE ONLY POOLING!
DON'T HIT ME I'M ONLY A KITTEN!
SOMETHING TELLS ME IT'S TIME TO GO!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES CHILDREN
THEN I MANDED 'EM A FEW LIKE THIS IN THE VACINITY OF THEIR LUNCH RECEPTICLES, THEN AFTER THAT!—
WELL! SEE WHAT I SEE!
LOOK OUT GRENADIER! YOU AIN'T THROUGH YET, THERE'S A BIRD COMING!
WHEN A BUNCH OF OVERGROWN CATS ATTEMPT TO MAKE A LIGHT LUNCH OUT OF YOURS TRULY, IT'S ME, RIGHTSHOULDER SHIFT, THE GRENADIER, THAT CAN TEACH 'EM THEIR TABLE MANNERS!


WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S UP TO ME TO GIVE THIS THING A LICKIN' FIGHTIN'S MY REGULAR BUSINESS, BUT I DIDN'T SIGN ANY AGREEMENT TO SCRAP OVERTIME AND THERE WAS NOTHIN' ABOUT HORSEBACK BIRDS IN THE CONTRACT!
THE FUNNY SIDE
SECTION OF
The World.
SUNDAY JULY 19 1908.
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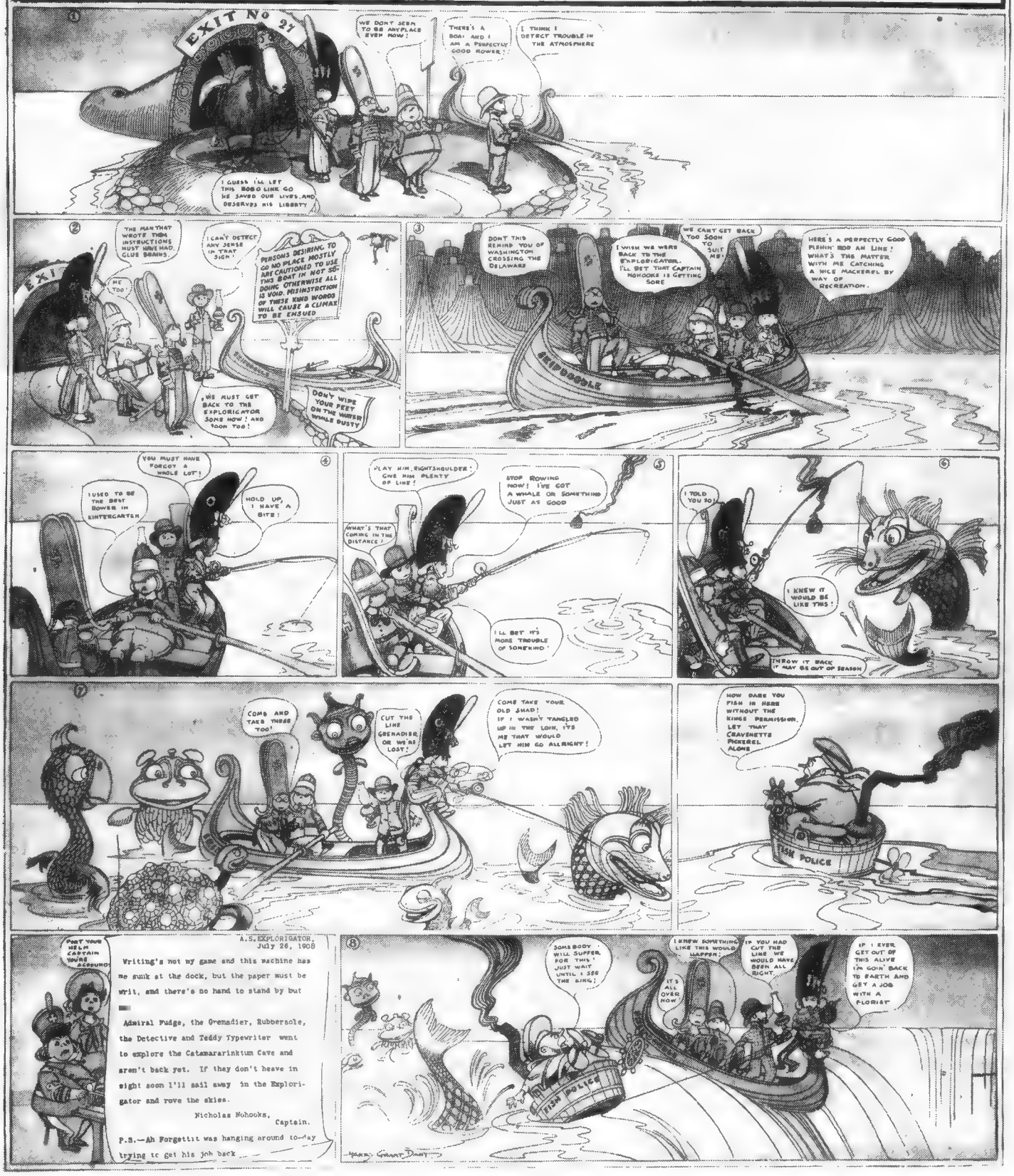
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Grenadier Shift Rides the Moon King's Oriole

WELL, HERE'S WHERE WE START!
I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S BOSS!
NOW, YOU OVERGROWN CANARY! WILL YOU PROMISE TO BE GOOD!
I HAVEN'T WRITTEN ANYTHING FOR THE PAPER IN TWO WEEKS.
WE MUST FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE AT ONCE.
NOW YOU ALL GET IN LINE AND FOLLOW ME, THIS PRANCIN WOODPECKER OUGHT TO SHOW US THE WAY OUT OF HERE. AND I'M JUST THE BOY THAT CAN IMPRESS ON HIS WEAK MIND THE NECESSITY OF DOIN' THAT SAME!
WELL! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT! TRYING TO STEAL THE PACING ORIOLE!
HEAD CAT KEEPER
COME BACK WITH THAT STEED! THAT'S THE KING'S PRIVATE ORIOLE!
LOOK WHAT'S COMING!
WHERE DID HE COME FROM DO YOU SUPPOSE
IM GETTING TIRED OF SEEING THOSE KIND OF THINGS
I WONDER HOW THAT SLIPPED IT'S COLLAR! GRAB MY COAT TAILS AND HANG ON TIGHT.
IF MY COAT TAILS HOLD OUT WE'RE SAVED
HANG ON TIGHT TIMOTHY
I DIDN'T KNOW IT COULD FLY!
THIS EXPLORING BUSINESS IS GETTING TO BE TOO DANGEROUS TO SUIT ME
COME BACK WITH THAT ORIOLE! DO YOU WANT TO GET ME FIRED?
DROP THAT BIRD NOW! THE KING WILL BE WILD IF HE HEARS ABOUT THIS!
CAN'T YOU HIT UP THAT ROBIN A BIT HE'S GETTING CLOSE!
THIS WILL MAKE A GOOD STORY!
HANG ON TIGHT NOW, AND I'LL SAVE YOU YET
MORE SPEED!

JULY 26 1908

THE EXPLORIGATOR —They Make Their Escape in the Skipdoodle.


EXIT No 21
WE DON'T SEEM TO BE ANYPLACE EVEN NOW!
THERE'S A BOAT AND I AM A PERFECTLY GOOD ROWER!
I THINK I DETECT TROUBLE IN THE ATMOSPHERE
I GUESS I'LL LET THIS BOBO LINK GO HE SAVED OUR LIVES AND DESERVES HIS LIBERTY
THE MAN THAT WROTE THOSE INSTRUCTIONS MUST HAVE HAD GLUE BRAINS
I CAN'T DETECT ANY SENSE IN THAT SIGN!
ME TOO!
PERSONS DESIRING TO GO NO PLACE MOSTLY ARE CAUTIONED TO USE THIS BOAT IN NOT SO-DOING OTHERWISE ALL IS VOID. MISINSTRUCTION OF THESE KIND WORDS WILL CAUSE A CLIMAX TO BE ENSUED
WE MUST GET BACK TO THE EXPLORIGATOR SOME HOW! AND SOON TOO!
DON'T WIPE YOUR FEET ON THE WATER ON THE WHOLE DUSTY
DONT THIS REMIND YOU OF WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE
I WISH WE WERE BACK TO THE EXPLORIGATOR. I'LL BET THAT CAPTAIN NOHOOKS IS GETTING SORE
WE CANT GET BACK TOO SOON TO SUIT ME!
HERE'S A PERFECTLY GOOD FISHIN' ROD AN LINE! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME CATCHING A NICE MACKEREL BY WAY OF RECREATION.
SKIPDOODLE
YOU MUST HAVE FORGOT A WHOLE LOT!
I USED TO BE THE BEST ROWER IN KINTERGARTEN
HOLD UP, I HAVE A BITE!
PLAY HIM, RIGHTSHOULDER! GIVE HIM PLENTY OF LINE!
STOP ROWING NOW! I'VE GOT A WHALE OR SOMETHING JUST AS GOOD
WHAT'S THAT COMING IN THE DISTANCE!
I'LL BET IT'S MORE TROUBLE OF SOMEKIND!
I TOLD YOU SO!
I KNEW IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS!
THROW IT BACK IF MAY BE OUT OF SEASON
COME AND TAKE THESE TOO!
CUT THE LINE GRENADIER OR WE'RE LOST!
COME TAKE YOUR OLD SHAD! IF I WASN'T TANGLED UP IN THE LINE, IT'S ME THAT WOULD LET HIM GO ALLRIGHT!
HOW DARE YOU FISH IN HERE WITHOUT THE KINGS PERMISSION. LET THAT CRAVENETTE PICKEREL ALONE
FISH POLICE
PUT YOUR HELM CAPTAIN YOURE ASCOUND!
A.S. EXPLORIGATOR, July 26, 1908
Writing's not my game and this machine has me sunk at the dock, but the paper must be writ, and there's no hand to stand by but
Admiral Fudge, the Grenadier, Rubbersole, the Detective and Teddy Typewriter went to explore the Catamararinktum Cave and aren't back yet. If they don't heave in sight soon I'll sail away in the Explorigator and rove the skies.
Nicholas Nohooks, Captain.
P.S.—Ah Forgettit was hanging around today trying to get his job back
SOMEBODY WILL SUFFER FOR THIS! JUST WAIT UNTIL I SEE THE KING!
I KNEW SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN!
IF YOU HAD CUT THE LINE WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL RIGHT
IF I EVER GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE I'M GOIN' BACK TO EARTH AND GET A JOB WITH A FLORIST
IT'S ALL OVER NOW
FISH POLICE
Harm. Grant Dacy

Funny Side of the World AUG. 2 1908.
THE EXPLORIGATOR—They Ride the Tame Watermelons
DONT THIS REMIND YOU OF COLUMBUS DISCOVERING AMERICA?
I DONT SEE THE EXPLORIGATOR ANY WHERE!
IT REMINDS ME THAT I'M STILL TIED UP AND SOME OF YOU'LL HAVE TO HELP LOOSEN ME!
THAT WAS THE NARROWEST ESCAPE WE EVER HAD!
THEY'RE THE FIRST TAME WATERMELLONS I EVER SAW
LET'S TRY, WE MUST GET BACK SOMEHOW
MAYBE WE CAN RIDE THEM LIKE SHIPT DID THE ORIOLE
WATERMELON PASTURE DONT FEED OR PAMPER THE FRUIT.
THIS STEED WAS NEVER BUILT TO FIT MY MEASURE!
IF RUBBERSOLE IS GOIN' TO LEAD I CAN SEE OUR FINISH WE NEVER LEADS TO ANYTHING BUT TROUBLE!
IF YOU DONT LIKE IT YOU CAN STAY HERE
RUBBERSOLE WILL FIND THE WAY, JUST FOLLOW ME!
I WISH THIS ROAD WAS WIDER
FOLLOW ME
THIS MAKS A FINE HILL CLIMBER BUT WE AINT NO HAVD S
I WONDER WHAT GENERAL NAPOLEON WOULD THINK IF HE KREW I WAS OUT WATERMELON RIDING
I'D RATHER WALK!
IF THIS ROAD WAS WIDER AND HAD A RAILING I WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE
I THINK I DETECT TROUBLE AHEAD
I FEEL AS THOUGH SOMETHING WAS ABOUT TO OCCUR
I HEAR SOMEBODY SINGING
I HEAR MUSIC!
IF ONE OF THESE MORE CANTELOPES EVER SLIP IT WILL BE WITH THIS EXPEDITION
AH, LOVES TO SEE THE CHICKENS A PIPPIN ON THE TREESES, AH DELIGHTS TO SEE THE WATERMILLIONS DANCIN IN THE BREEZES!
MAKS THEM STOP!
THAT MUSIC IS MAKING THEM DO THIS!
STOP YOUR DANCING, THIS AINT ANY PLACE TO TRY THESE FANCY STEPS!
AH WORE MY SUNDAY PANTS TO THE WATERMILLION DANCE WAY DOWN BY THE SEA SHORE ON THE LAKE
OFFICE FIRST ASSISTANT FRUIT TRAINER
OPEN FIRST AND SECOND MONDAYS OF EACH WEEK
WHAT IS TO DOIN' WID DEM EDUCATED WATERMILLIONS! GET OFF THEM PRUNTS IMMEJETLY! THEM'S THE KING'S. THEM IS. GOODNES WONT HE BE INDIGNANT WHEN HE HEARS THEY IS BEEN RID PERMISCUS!
STOP THAT MUSIC! DONT YOU SEE THAT THESE ANIMALS WONT STAND STILL!
U.S.Explorigator,
Aug.2, 1908.
The Captain says he will not write another line so it's up to yours truly.
The Admiral and the rest of the bunch are on their way back. The Captain had to lick the Chief Eskimo to-day for trying to steal the Explorigator. The Captain tried to throw him off the Moon, but he fell back every time.
We will leave the Moon next week and we will all be glad to get away. I hope we never come back.
MAURICE MIZZENTOP
The Crew
I DONT KEEP IF THEM MILLIONS DOES GET AWAY I KIN TRAIN SOME MORE OF EM NEXT SEASON GOODNESS KNOWS
GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY! TELL THEM I DIED BRAVE!
NOW SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, YOU CHOCOLATE MUSIC BOX!
IT'S ALL OVER THIS TIME SURE!

Funny Side of the World AUG,9 1908.
THE EXPLORIGATOR—Admiral Fudge Comes Back to Earth Again
THAT WAS THE NARROWEST ESCAPE YET AH I AM GOING TO QUIT THE EXPLORING GAME AND WRITE UP PINK TEAS AND CHESS TOURNAMENTS
FIGHTIN'S MY TRADE AND DANGER I'M NOT AFRAID OF BUT I DO HAVE MY OBJECTIONS TO BEING DRIVEN INTO THE FRUIT BUSINESS WITHOUT FAIR WARNIN'!
DON'T THIS REMIND YOU OF GENERAL JACKSON AT NEW ORLEANS?
THERE'S THE EXPLORIGATOR. JUST AS I SAID IT WOULD BE, I GUESS YOU BELIEVE THAT RUBBERSOLE KNOWS SOMETHING AFTER ALL
EXPLORIGATOR
HERE THEY COME BACK
I'D LIKE TO GET ONE CRACK AT THAT HEATHEN!
GET THE EXPLORIGATOR READY IN A RUSH. WE MUST GET AWAY FROM HERE AT ONCE.
WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THIS YELLOW THING?
I DLONT CLARE ALLE SAME-O TO ME
SEIZE HIM AND PUT HIM IN IRONS
ME WANTE GLO BACK TO CHINA NO GOOD-O PLACE HERE!
I HOPE THE IRONS WILL BE GOOD AND HOT!
SAVED!
NOW THAT WE'RE LEAVING THE MOON I THINK I'LL SLICE A PIECE OF GREEN CHEESE OFF OF THAT DORNICK AS A SOUVENIR OF THE OCCASION!
WITH ME TRUSTY BAYONET I WILL NOW CARVE OFF A PIECE TO SHOW TO THE FOLKS WHEN WE GET HOME
IF IT WEREN'T FOR NEGLECTING MY DUTY AS A SOLDIER, I'D GO BACK AND GIVE YOU THE GOOD LICKING YOU DESERVE!
I BEG YOUR PARDON! I THOUGHT YOU WAS A ROCK.
IF I ESCAPE WITH MY LIFE THIS TIME, I'LL JOIN THE LITTLE MOTHERS SOCIETY AND MAKE MY LIVING SELLIN' VIOLETS.
HARRY GRANT DART

Pastel portrait for Nemo by Stan Drake

Mort Walker Talks Candidly About His Career, Comics' Future, History and Funny Stuff

Mort Walker, a product of America's heartland—an appelation that could not seem more trite and meaningless in the 1980s, except that it's right on the mark.

Mort was born nearly in the geographical center of the United States, in El Dorado, Kansas, on Sept. 3, 1923. He now lives in Greenwich, Connecticut, one of the symbolic bastions of the American establishment. He appears to be a typical suburbanite, even more urbane and sedate than the more-normal neighbors along Hi and Lois's tree-lined street. But behind his dignified exterior is a bubbling ferment of creativity.

A virtual one-man cartoon factory, Mort has been, since breaking into the field in the late 1940s, prolific to the extent that the statistics are dizzying. For a while, he was the most-published magazine cartoonist in America; he held three demanding jobs simultaneously for a while; he has created several major strips; and he constantly plans more of them. He epitomizes a drawing style that his fellows have dubbed "bigfoot," and in Europe is called "The Connecticut School." Walker's studio, because of the activity and the number of artists who call it home-base, has been nicknamed King Features East.

For all these achievements, he is proudest of his work establishing the Museum of Cartoon Art in Port Chester, N.Y., and indeed the institution might be his most enduring monument. It is the first major institution of its kind in the United States.

With such a career, it is a formidable task just to cover all the bases—as well as explore Mort's views on other aspects of the cartooning business—but we tried (with Mort's son Brian, who serves as director, with Chuck Green, of the Museum of Cartoon Art) on an afternoon in July of 1983 in Mort's studio.

By the way, a propos that sedate image of Mr. Walker: even he can be outdone. He once told me of a session he had with a battery of lawyers and bankers, all in three-piece suits and of conservative mein; ensconced in an oak-panelled boardroom for interminable hours shuffling the papers that held control over life, limb, and finances of the Walker empire, Mort suddenly could take it no more. He messed his hair, let one eyeglass-stem fall down his face, threw his tie over one shoulder, and called out in a buck-toothed scream: "When do we get to the part about me being of sound mind???"

—Rick Marschall

"If I have fun, the reader's going to have fun..."

Marschall: *I'd like to ask you, of all the strips that you've done through the years—and we'll get to naming them and talking about them—if you could jump out of your skin and look at it objectively, is it because you're prolific, a talent running in all directions, or do you still think you have one more strip in you that you want to get out. . . another kind of a statement?*

Walker: Most of them are accidental. I didn't really intend to start any of the strips, really, except maybe the last one (*The Evermores*). *Hi and Lois* was started because someone had

asked me to write gags for a family strip for another syndicate, and I called (King Features Comics Editor) Sylvan Byck and I asked, "Can I write gags for another syndicate?" He said, "No, but if you want to write a family strip, write one for us." I said, "Do you really want another one of those things?" and he said, "Sure." And it was as easy as that. Also, I found myself in the midst of writing another strip and looking for an artist, and found Dik Browne. Turned over a rock, and there he was.

And *Mrs. Fitz*: I was trying to find a strip for a friend of mine to do, and what I did was look through all the crazy characters he drew, and thought, "Gee, how can I combine all these really odd, crazy characters in the one strip?" I thought maybe it could have been a boardinghouse. So, I really was trying to help my friend, but then my assistant looked at it and said, *Why give it to him? Let me do it.* So it ends up as *Mrs. Fitz's Flats*. And with *Sam's Strip*, we were just joking around in the studio one day, and said it'd be funny if we had a strip where we could hire old comic strip characters, old down-and-out characters that aren't being used any more. We'd been bouncing ideas around, jotting them down, and we had that strip, not even knowing how we'd ever do it. With *Boner's Ark*, we thought, you know, we were doing an awful lot of (Beetle) gags, so we had a lot of rejects. We only used maybe a third of all the gags we'd write. So we were just sitting around wishing we could find something to do with these old gags. So I said, "Create another strip where we can use these old gags. Similar circumstances, but disguise it, so that nobody can recognize it."

Marschall: *A closed community, like an Army camp.*

Walker: The authority figure, and then all the community—so how about an ark with a captain? He's the authority figure, and all the animals are making life hard for him. We never did use any of the old gags! We got into it, and we decided the gags weren't good enough.

Marschall: *So you still have all those rejects in some big filing cabinet, then?*

Walker: I've got them in big cardboard boxes. Then, *Sam and Silo*: another syndicate came to me and said, "Do you own the rights to *Sam's Strip*?" We said, "Yes, we do." They said, "We think it ought to be revived," which I'm for. So we went to King Features and said, "Do you have any objections to us reviving him? (Artist) Jerry (Dumas) is not under contract to them, so Jerry can draw, and I won't have anything to do with it, but we'd like to see it revived." That's when they turned around and said, "Heck, we don't want you working for another syndicate, so let us revive it. But we'd like to have it changed. We don't want it to be about old comic strips any more, we'd just like the main characters to be normal."

The Evermores was just an experiment in creating a strip for King Features, because at that time (Comics Editor) Bill Yates said they weren't getting any good features and I said, "Why don't I try to create some? I know a little bit about creating comic strips." So, I told Bill a number of ideas I had, and he settled on the ones we essentially ended up with.

Marschall: *This is the one by Johnny Sajem and it debuted, when, in 1982?*

Boner

Mrs. Fitz

Walker: In March of '82.

Marschall: *Do you do gags on that, or guide it editorially?*

Walker: Every now and then I'll send in a dozen gags or so, just to keep my hand in it, help him out, give him some direction. *The Evermores* are changing now—probably by the time this comes out it all will have been changed. But it sold pretty well, then it just sat there, and we decided it needed another scope. Well, we can't go back to the same editors and ask them to buy it now, because they've already rejected it. You can't go back unless something is changed. So, we decided the theme jumped around too much among the ages and you couldn't really get to know anybody from those various ages. We decided to settle on one time era, and so we decided that everybody seemed to like the Roman era the best, and it had a lot of parallels with our society—the laws, the roads, the taxes, and so forth. So he's going to be a Roman and work in a sculpture factory. They only let him do feet.

Marschall: *Is the title changing?*

Walker: We're going to keep the title the same.

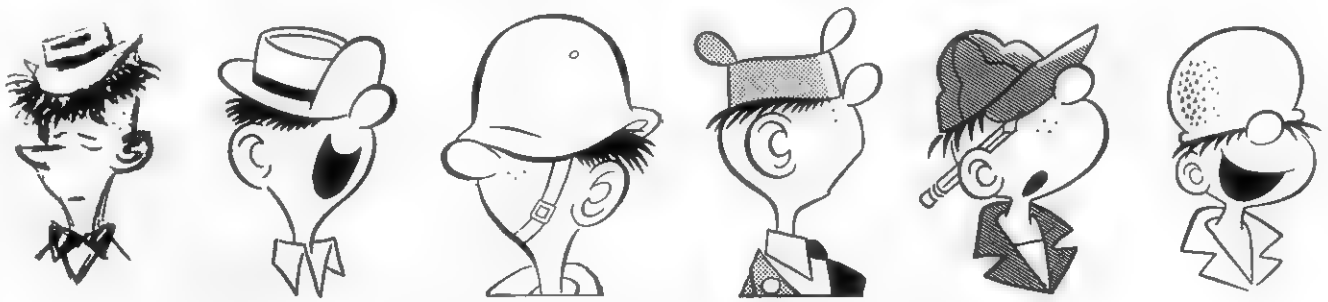
Marschall: *One thing that always impressed me about you is that you were always a comics fan. A lot of the guys drawing today had read the funnies, saved them, and clipped them, and all that, but you wrote fan letters to cartoonists and asked for originals. I guess if there had been comic conventions back when you were a kid, you would have been going to them and organizing them. You used to form cartoon clubs—*

Walker: We had a cartoon club in high school, and I used to get anybody with any time at all, and get them in there and get them to drawing and cutting up the magazines.

Marschall: *Not everyone did that in those days—*

Walker: I was a collector of the first order, when I discovered

Evolution: The changing face of Beetle Bailey—from the '40s when he was named Spider, to today.



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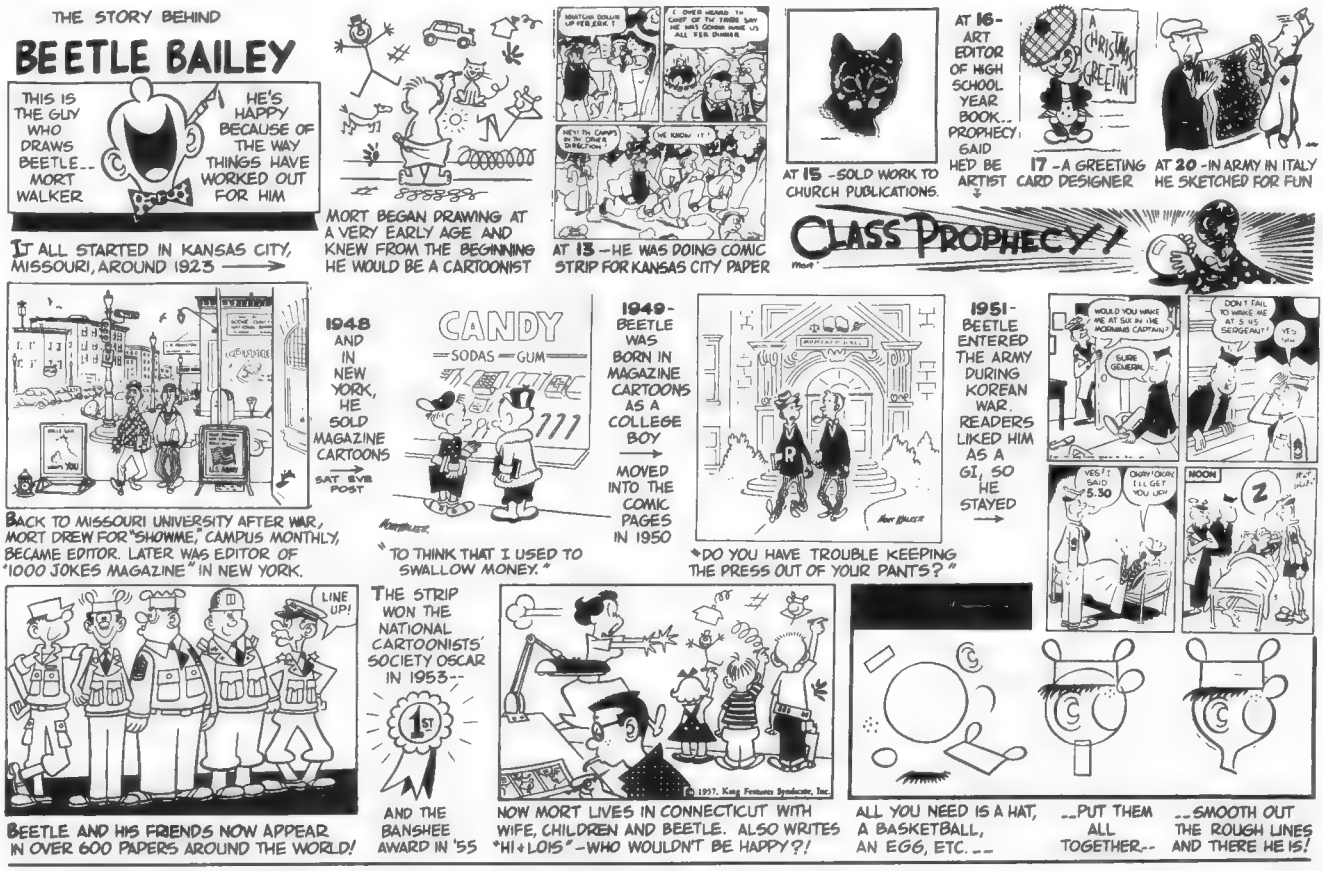

THE STORY BEHIND
BEETLE BAILEY
THIS IS THE GUY WHO DRAWS BEETLE-- MORT WALKER
HE'S HAPPY BECAUSE OF THE WAY THINGS HAVE WORKED OUT FOR HIM
IT ALL STARTED IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, AROUND 1923
MORT BEGAN DRAWING AT A VERY EARLY AGE AND KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING HE WOULD BE A CARTOONIST
AT 13 -HE WAS DOING COMIC STRIP FOR KANSAS CITY PAPER
AT 15 -SOLD WORK TO CHURCH PUBLICATIONS.
AT 16- ART EDITOR OF HIGH SCHOOL YEAR BOOK.. PROPHECY: SAID HE'D BE ARTIST
17 -A GREETING CARD DESIGNER
AT 20 -IN ARMY IN ITALY HE SKETCHED FOR FUN
CLASS PROPHECY!
BACK TO MISSOURI UNIVERSITY AFTER WAR, MORT DREW FOR "SHOWME," CAMPUS MONTHLY, BECAME EDITOR. LATER WAS EDITOR OF "1000 JOKES MAGAZINE" IN NEW YORK.
1948 AND IN NEW YORK, HE SOLD MAGAZINE CARTOONS
SAT EVE POST
CANDY
SODAS — GUM
"TO THINK THAT I USED TO SWALLOW MONEY."
1949- BEETLE WAS BORN IN MAGAZINE CARTOONS AS A COLLEGE BOY
MOVED INTO THE COMIC PAGES IN 1950
"DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING THE PRESS OUT OF YOUR PANTS?"
1951- BEETLE ENTERED THE ARMY DURING KOREAN WAR. READERS LIKED HIM AS A GI, SO HE STAYED
WOULD YOU WAKE ME AT SIX IN THE MORNING CAPTAIN?
SURE GENERAL
DON'T FAIL TO WAKE ME AT 5 MY SERGEANT!
YES SIR
YES, IT SAID 5:30
OKAY OKAY I'LL GET YOU UP!
MOON
2
LINE UP!
BEETLE AND HIS FRIENDS NOW APPEAR IN OVER 600 PAPERS AROUND THE WORLD!
THE STRIP WON THE NATIONAL CARTOONISTS' SOCIETY OSCAR IN 1953--
1ST
AND THE BANSHEE AWARD IN '55
© 1957, King Features Syndicate, Inc.
NOW MORT LIVES IN CONNECTICUT WITH WIFE, CHILDREN AND BEETLE. ALSO WRITES "HI + LOIS" -WHO WOULDN'T BE HAPPY?!
ALL YOU NEED IS A HAT, A BASKETBALL, AN EGG, ETC. --
--PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER--
--SMOOTH OUT THE ROUGH LINES AND THERE HE IS!

Bio: In 1957, Walker produced this capsule history as a newspaper promotion for the Comics Council.

that in Kansas City, in the library down there, they had a newspaper reading room. Especially during the Depression, people would be looking for jobs all over the country, so they had newspapers from everywhere in the country. Hundreds of them. So I went down and got them to save them for me each week, because they took them off the racks and put up the new papers. So they saved me all the papers, and my father would drive me down and I would come home with a whole carload of newspapers. And I would sit down and clip out all the strips from all over the country. Then I would put little rubber bands around them and put them in a box and put them up in the attic. I used to sit up there in that attic and sweat away and read those things. I read every strip in the country at that time. I saved all the Big Little Books, and all the comic magazines of that time before Superman—you know, there were humorous comic books.

Marschall: *Newspaper reprint magazines.*

Walker: *Tip Top*, that kind of thing. One that I think preceded *Superman* that I liked very much was *Doctor Occult*.

Marschall: Doctor Occult, *yeah. Siegel and Shuster.*

Walker: Then when I went off to the war, my parents moved and my mother threw them all out.

Marschall: *Just think, if she had saved them, you could be rich today.*

Walker: Yeah. (*laughter*)

Marschall: *What were your favorites?*

Walker: I always liked the funny ones—except for Milt Caniff's and Roy Crane's strips—but I liked the humor strips the best. I liked *Li'l Abner* and *Blondie*. *Moon Mullins* was one of my favorites, probably because my father laughed so hard at it. He used to just break up, tears would run down his cheeks, and he couldn't breathe, and he'd roll on the floor, laughing at *Moon Mullins*.

Marschall: *I always wondered if* Mrs. Fitz's Flats *was some kind of homage to that situation where a boarding house has characters coming and going.*

Walker: Maybe just a little bit.

Marschall: *So you wrote letters and got originals.*

Walker: I used to do an imitation of the guy's character and write him a letter, and I'd wait and wait and wait and hope that he'd send back an original strip. Almost everybody came through. There were a couple of them that didn't. I was always mad at Martin Branner because he never sent me a *Winnie Winkle*, although I told him he was the greatest cartoonist in the world. I told his son that one day, that I was always mad at his father because he never sent me an original, and he said, "I'll send you one. I'll make up for my father's misdeeds," and he sent me an original. Nineteen twenty-seven, I think it was. Beautiful. But I still have all those strips, except for the ones I gave to the Museum. Some of them were very nice. Willard Mullin said, "Say, Morton, those cartoons you sent me were swell. You'll be a big-shot cartoonist someday." And Lank Leonard was cleaning out his closet just a few years before he died and he ran across the letter I sent him telling him he was the greatest cartoonist in the world. (*laughter*) He got all excited about it.

Marschall: *That's one way to start a museum, Just tell everyone that they're the greatest.*

Walker: I think that I was sincere every time; you switch favorites, going with one guy for a while, and then another guy for a while. I picked up all the strips and all the techniques and combined them all into a regular style.

Marschall: *You seem to make yourself very accessible to young cartoonists. Is it because you're passing the favor along that other cartoonists. . .*

Walker: I can certainly put myself in their place, the kids that

HERE WE ARE! ROCKVIEW U.
WELL, SO LONG, KID. SEE YOU AT THE PEP RALLIES
AREN'T YOU GOING TO GET YOUR BAGGAGE?
THIS IS IT!
HOW CAN YOU GET ALONG EIGHT MONTHS WITH JUST THAT?
MY BOY, HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF ROOMMATES?
MORT WALKER

The first Beetle Bailey strip—Sept. 4, 1950.

come up and ask me to look at their drawings. I remember how nervous I was asking people to look at my drawings, and how anxious I was to get an answer back from them, and so forth. I think that they're just like I was when I was a kid. I can sense the excitement they get when they get an original drawing from you, or a letter or something.

Marschall: *I wonder if you remember that 17 or 18 years ago, a kid who was just getting started drawing in New Jersey called you up and told a lie that he was going to be in the Greenwich neighborhood and could he drop by, and you said, "Fine, come on by," and you spent the afternoon very politely looking at sketches.*

Walker: And there he is. (*laughter*)

Marschall: *It did mean a lot to me. If a cartoonist doesn't mind doing that, whether he sees his own experience in it or whatever, it's an investment. A future career, excitement, whatever. It's a hundred times—*

Walker: The most difficult part about it with some of them was trying to calm them down. They get so excited being in the presence of a master, or whatever, that they're tongue-tied. They say all kinds of dumb things, and I just try to pat them on the back. Kids send these things in; one won (the Museum's) first prize in the 17-year-old age group. His parents brought him in, and he wouldn't come in to see me. Finally, they dragged him in there, and he was real embarrassed. I did a few drawings for him, but his parents did all the talking.

Marschall: *He'll grow up to do a pantomime strip. I know you submitted stuff for the* Open Road For Boys *and all that. Did you take any correspondence cartooning courses?*

Walker: I started the Landon course, and never finished it. I always regretted not having seen the whole thing, because I thought it was a good course. But I don't think anybody ever finished one of those courses. That's how the Famous Artists School used to make all their money, because nobody ever finished. Those places are really expensive. But I think W.L. Evans's cost seven dollars and fifty cents. I always worked for the school papers. I sold my first one when I was 12, to *Child Life* magazine. Then I began sending cartoons into other magazines. I sold one to *Flying Aces* for, I think, two-fifty. Then, when I was in high school, I got a job drawing for a dairy magazine, and they paid me seven dollars and fifty cents.

Marschall: *And talk about investments. Two bucks or seven bucks then was probably greater in excitement value than—*

Walker: I financed all my dates for a week. And then I had a comic strip running in the newspaper, and they used to pay me a dollar. That ran for about a year. It was a weekly shopper—not a regular newspaper, but a weekly shopping guide. I got my first big break as a professional designing cards for Hallmark, when I was 18.

Marschall: *Eighteen. That must have been good experience for you. Designing cards means coming up with the idea?*

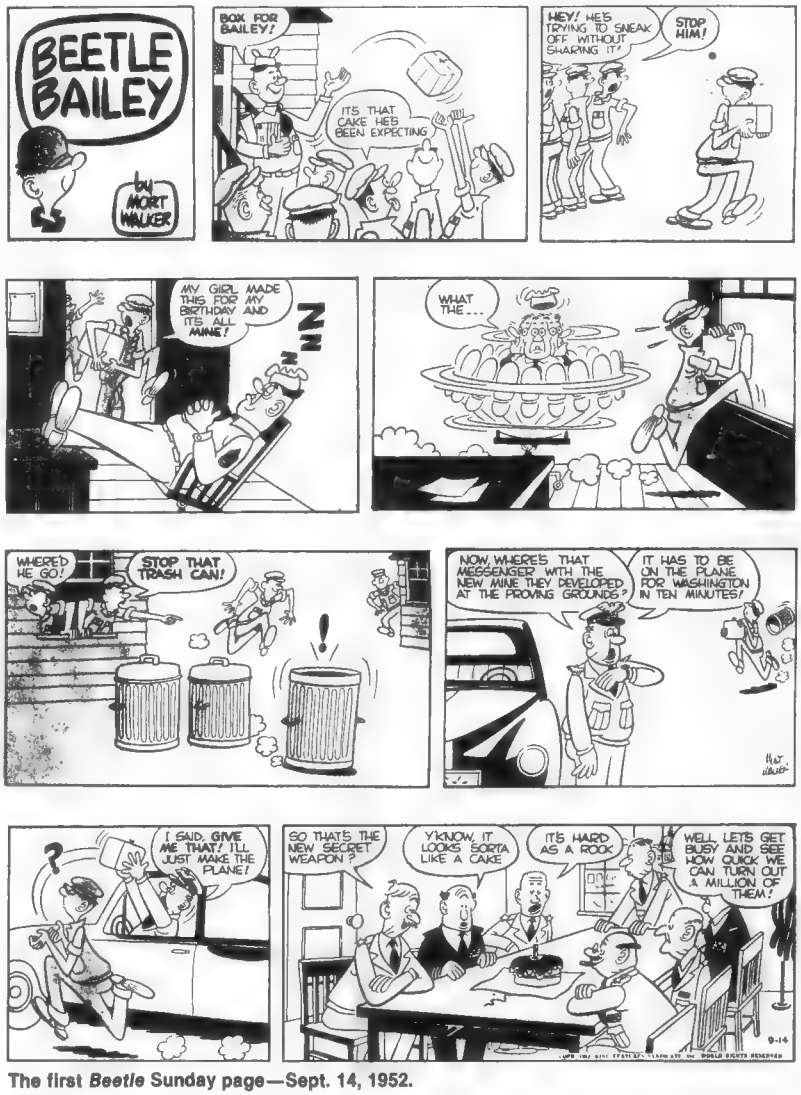
Walker: I worked with the writers, and I tried to get their conception of the card down on paper. So, I designed all the cards that Hallmark put out for a couple of years. They would then . . .

Marschall: *All of them? The sentimental ones, as well as the gag*

Six months later, Beetle—in this strip—enlists.

SURE IS SAD TO SEE YOU GUYS LEAVING FOR THE ARMY
WHY DON'T YOU JOIN UP, BEETLE?
MAYBE HE HASN'T GOT THE NERVE
3-13
I HAVEN'T GOT THE NERVE!? WHY, I COME FROM A LONG LINE OF FIGHTERS! MY GRANDFATHER WAS . . .
MORT WALKER
ARMY RECRUITIN
THINK I'M A COWARD, HUH?
NOW HELP HIM HOLD UP HIS RIGHT HAND

ones?
Walker: I didn't do any flowers—those were pretty standard. They used to take the same flowers on different greeting cards.
Marschall: *Was this in effect good training as a gagman?*
Walker: It was good, because I worked with the writers, and I saw how they wrote. They used to have a writing conference every morning, and that's where I got my idea for having my writing conference that I have with all my writers. Every morning we would come in and somebody would project the verse on the screen, and somebody would read them. Occasionally they would let me read them, because they thought I had a nice voice. Squeaky, but sincere. But usually the vice-president of the company would read them, because he was sort of an actor-type, and he would love to read them. A very soothing voice; I used to go to sleep. But I think that was awful good training for me.
Marschall: *Do you know any other cartoonists who come from that kind of training? Russell Myers was. . .*
Walker: They didn't do the same job. They worked in the art department. I don't even know if they had the equivalent of what I was in those days. I tell you, I don't even think they have a writing department any more. I think it's all freelance, or else the artist sits around and thinks up the verses, or the "sentiment," as they called it. Even if it was just a slam card, they called it a "sentiment."
Marschall: *In 1965, you said one of the things you were proudest of is that no one has ever touched pen and pencil to the strip but you.*
Walker: That has since gone by.
Marschall: *Since gone by the boards. You have an assembly line of some of the most talented guys in the business, but obviously, from this Hallmark experience, you were in the trenches, sketching, drawing constantly on a couple of strips and everything. Did this become something that seemed more efficient, or did your fingers fall off after a. . .*
Walker: It was another one of those things that I had to do. Even now, nobody else has ever drawn the strip in pencil. I've done all the pencil work, the lay-outs and composition, the balloons, the expressions, and all that. I still do that, but there was a time there when I was completely drawing *Boner's Ark*, for a period of about two years, and drawing *Beetle* completely. Jerry Dumas was doing my backgrounds in *Beetle Bailey* in ink, and I did them in pencil. I just found I couldn't keep up with the work. I was doing two full strips, and trying to write all the gags too. So I expanded my writing staff and got somebody to do my inking. Later on, when I saw *Boner* didn't seem to be going in any lofty direction, I decided it wasn't worth my time to continue inking that, so I turned it over to Frank Johnson.
Marschall: *When you started* Beetle, *you were about at that time the most published magazine gag cartoonist in America.*
Walker: For one year.
Marschall: *Yeah. 'Forty-nine, was it?*
Walker: Nineteen forty-nine.
Marschall: *Did you give up the magazine work when the strip started, or did you try to keep both going?*
Walker: I did some magazine work. I found out I couldn't turn out a batch a week like I did, but every now and then I would do another batch, and I would mail them in. I kept going for a while, about a year.
Marschall: *You wanted to, or you had to?*
Walker: We had to. I began having children, and I had a home and a wife. . .


BEETLE BAILEY
BY MORT WALKER
BOX FOR BAILEY!
IT'S THAT CAKE HE'S BEEN EXPECTING
HEY! HE'S TRYING TO SNEAK OFF WITHOUT SHARING IT!
STOP HIM!
MY GIRL MADE THIS FOR MY BIRTHDAY AND IT'S ALL MINE!
ZZZ
WHAT THE...
WHERE'D HE GO!
STOP THAT TRASH CAN!
NOW, WHERE'S THAT MESSENGER WITH THE NEW MINE THEY DEVELOPED AT THE PROVING GROUNDS?
IT HAS TO BE ON THE PLANE FOR WASHINGTON IN TEN MINUTES!
I SAID, GIVE ME THAT! I'LL JUST MAKE THE PLANE!
SO THAT'S THE NEW SECRET WEAPON?
Y'KNOW, IT LOOKS SORTA LIKE A CAKE
IT'S HARD AS A ROCK
WELL, LET'S GET BUSY AND SEE HOW QUICK WE CAN TURN OUT A MILLION OF THEM!
9-14
The first *Beetle* Sunday page—Sept. 14, 1952.

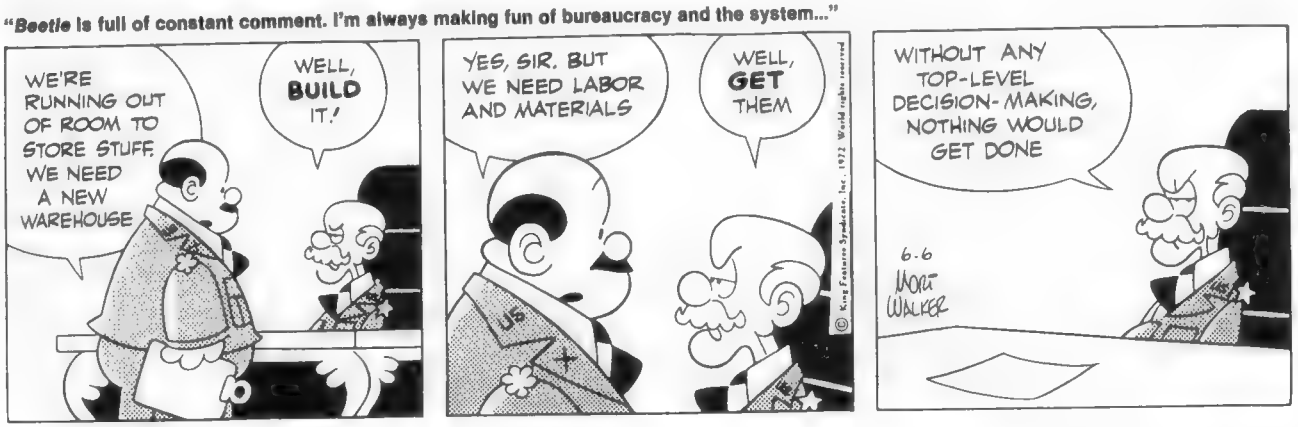
Marschall: *And a guarantee of not much more. . .*
Walker: The guarantee was $150 a week, which, you know, paid for some groceries, but I was also an editor at a Dell publishing company, and they paid me $45 a week. Being editor-in-chief with about three years behind me—they weren't known for their generosity, at least not with me. (*laughter*) In fact, they hired me at $50 a week and then they called me in the president's office and told me that "Mr. Delacourt made a mistake. He offered you too much. We want to start you at $45 a week, instead of $50." I asked why. They said they wanted some place for me to work up to. (*laughter*) That's when I should have turned around. But it was good experience, editing.
Marschall: *So that did overlap, then, working at Dell and doing the strip.*
Walker: Doing the strip, and doing magazine cartoons. I did three jobs at one time.
Marschall: *How long did it take until* Beetle *really clicked?*
Walker: It was only about a year. *Beetle* clicked after about six months. We began, and it was terrible, a dismal failure. Started in about 12 papers. At the end of six months we were in 25. I found out later on they considered dropping it when the year's contract was up. But then, I went to sell it back, and I said the Korean War's going on, maybe I ought to put Beetle in the Army.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WEARING THAT TIE TO A PARADE ?!
I COULDN'T FIND MY GI TIE, SIR
11-30
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU BEFORE THE MILITARY BOARD FOR THIS!
DISGRACEFUL
MORT WALKER

Censored: **A strip from the period when Walker's work offended the Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*.**

Marschall: *What did Sylvan do?*
Walker: He says, "No, I'd think that would be a mistake. That would be admitting the strip is a failure, and I think we'd lose plenty of papers." But then he got a call from the editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, who suggested that Beetle be put in the Army, because all the young men in college were going off to the Army. "Let's go ahead and do it, since he's our biggest client, but don't ever let them know that you had the idea first." So I never let on.
Marschall: *The customer's always right.*
Walker: *Beetle* took off after that, and immediately sold to about a hundred more papers.
Marschall: *Just from the basis of the change.*
Walker: And that they could go back to the editors now and say, "Look, we got a new strip."
Marschall: *At the time when the strip was banned by the* Stars and Stripes *in 1954, what kind of circulation did* Beetle *have at that time?*
Walker: At least another 200 papers. It really took off, picking up 30 to 40 papers a month at that time. The ban helped.
Marschall: *Mort Walker, anti-establishment radical.*
Walker: When the Korean War was over, I guess they went back to garrison life rather than combat life, and cleaned everybody up and had their beards shaved and ties attached to their necks and everything. They felt that anything that inspired any kind of disrespect and insubordination was out of place. As a matter of fact, they banned all cartoons that made fun of officers. That was their rule out there. I happened to have an old college friend who was on the staff out there and he wired me and told me that it had been banned. And I went to King Features to the publicity director and I said I thought this would make a good story. He said, "Let me think about it." A couple of days went by, and nothing happened, and I thought, well, this is a news story, and I told Sylvan all about it, and he said he was curious, let him see if he could light the fire under the syndicate. So he did, and they sent out a news release on it, and it was picked up by papers all over the world. Really fantastic.
Marschall: *So you were never intimidated to be more polite in portraying the officers or anything like that. You knew you were on the right track.*
Walker: I think my stuff was so mild. When I look back on the stuff in *Hubert* and Bill Mauldin, you know, *Willie and Joe*, and those wartime cartoons they used to do—I mean, they were vicious. They were pretty tough on officers.
Marschall: *In Sad Sack*, the officers had fangs... Brian (Walker) and I were just talking about why syndicate editors or whoever make the decisions like this don't see the advantage in that kind of self-generating publicity. I think Miss Buxley is a good example... the "sexism" controversy. Regardless of your position, whether the fact of the matter was that you were sexist or anti-military establishment or whatever, it's been proven time and time again that controversy helps circulation. The strip is talked about, written about...
Walker: I'm not sexist or anything. I'm showing sexist people acting. If you're going to write a story about a murderer, it doesn't mean that you're recommending murder. You know, I'm writing about these dumb people that act that way. I'm

"*Beetle* is full of constant comment. I'm always making fun of bureaucracy and the system..."


WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF ROOM TO STORE STUFF. WE NEED A NEW WAREHOUSE
WELL, BUILD IT!
YES, SIR. BUT WE NEED LABOR AND MATERIALS
WELL, GET THEM
WITHOUT ANY TOP-LEVEL DECISION-MAKING, NOTHING WOULD GET DONE
6-6
MORT WALKER
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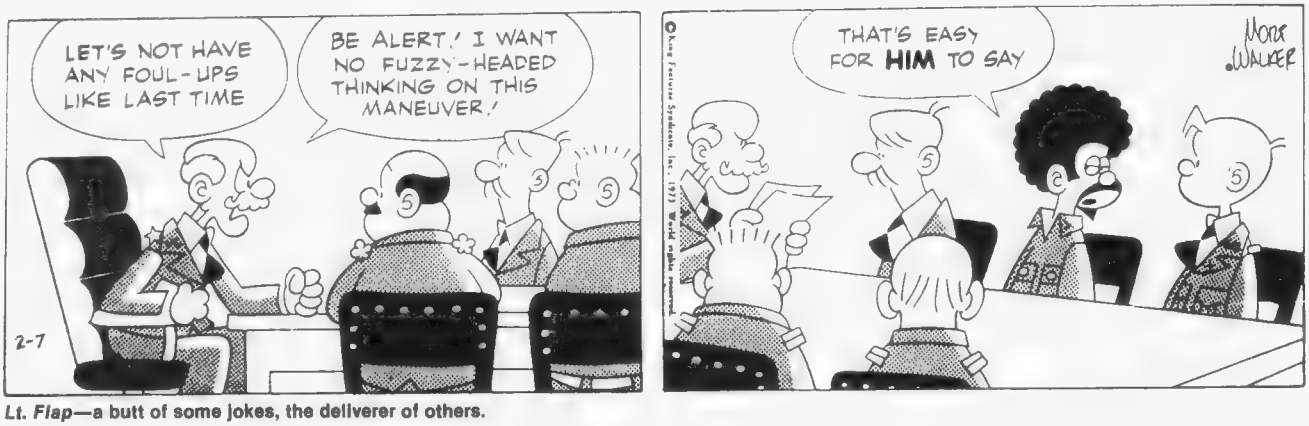

LET'S NOT HAVE ANY FOUL-UPS LIKE LAST TIME
BE ALERT.' I WANT NO FUZZY-HEADED THINKING ON THIS MANEUVER.'
2-7
THAT'S EASY FOR HIM TO SAY
MORT WALKER

Lt. Flap—a butt of some jokes, the deliverer of others.

making them look ridiculous. The General looks really silly, and I don't see how I'm promoting sexism in the officeplace by doing that.

Marschall: *On the contrary, I think you're being discriminatory against old Generals.*

Walker: How about sergeants? (*laughter*)

Brian Walker: *Do you have any people who actually pick the strip up because of this sexism, or is it just. . .*

Walker: That's hard to tell. I don't think it hurt me at all. I think there were a lot of papers that had editors that thought I was being sexist, and when they put it to the public, to the vote, they found out that everybody liked it, and they backed off. One up in New Hampshire somewhere said that he had never in all his years as being an editor had a situation that evoked so much human response. He was getting calls at home telling him that he was a fascist, a Nazi, censoring the press, dictating what people should read and shouldn't read.

Marschall: *Was the controversy as great when you introduced Lt. Flap? I know there was comment when you brought in a black character.*

Walker: *Stars and Stripes* banned me again, when I brought in Lt. Flap.

Marschall: *I didn't know that.*

Walker: Yeah. They were the only paper that really, actually banned me. There were a couple of papers that threatened to. People were a little concerned when I started doing it, because they thought I was going to do a funny, you know, "jigaboo."

Marschall: *Stereotype.*

Walker: Stereotype, yeah. And after a while they realized that, you know, I wasn't really making fun of him, he's just a funny character. I picked up a hundred papers when I brought him in. A lot of them in the Caribbean, and other places. We found some black readership.

Marschall: *Because you were integrating the strips.*

Walker: Well, they liked the character. Something for them to read in there.

Brian Walker: *Picked up a couple of real loyal fans, too, I think in Los Angeles.*

Walker: A black lady in Los Angeles had a lemon tree and kept sending me boxes of lemons. She called me "my blue-eyed soul brother." (*laughter*) She wanted to come visit me; she might even have proposed to me a couple of times.

Marschall: *Why was* Stars and Stripes *in that instance...were they just afraid that you'd go too far and—*

Walker: The story was they were having racial problems anyway, and they thought this might heat up a few things, causing some more trouble.

Marschall: *Beetle started as a magazine gag character, right?*

Walker: One of the things that happened to me when I came to New York to start selling magazine cartoons: I walked into the office of the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, which was the biggest user of cartoons at the time, and John Bailey was the editor, and he said, "Mort Walker, huh? I saw your cartoons in the (University of Missouri) *Showme* magazine." Later on, he suggested I do college cartoons.

Marschall: *Because that was your orientation in his mind.*

Walker: He thought I could do them better than family gags, since I wasn't married. He said, "Draw something you know about. You know those cartoons you used to do for *Showme*? Do some of those." So I did some, and he said, "Hey, that's a great character there," and he pointed at Beetle—or Spider, as he was known then. And he said, "Do more of him. Develop him into a feature, and maybe we'll take it." So, I began doing all kinds of gags, but they never took it as a feature. They just used a lot of them.

Marschall: *So, in other words, if you had drawn for a publisher, let's say a plumber's house organ, he'd be asking you to do plumbers' gags.*

Walker: Beetle would be a plumber. And probably be in two thousand papers. (*laughter*)

Marschall: *Beetle was named for John Bailey, right? Or is that just a coincidence?*

Walker: No. They didn't like the name Spider, because they already had a character in *Big Ben Bolt* called Spider, so they said you've got to change the name. I submitted about a dozen names, and they said just call him "Beetle." And somebody said, "Nyaah, he needs a last name." And we were struggling with a last name. The original contract was written *Beetle Botts*. And nobody seemed to like that too much. Jerry Marcus, who'd been my buddy making the rounds throughout the magazines, said, "Why don't you name him after John Bailey? John Bailey was the one who got you going on this thing." And I did.

Marschall: *Had to be alliterative, right? I think half the strips ever drawn were with alliterative titles.*

Walker: Easy to remember, I suppose.

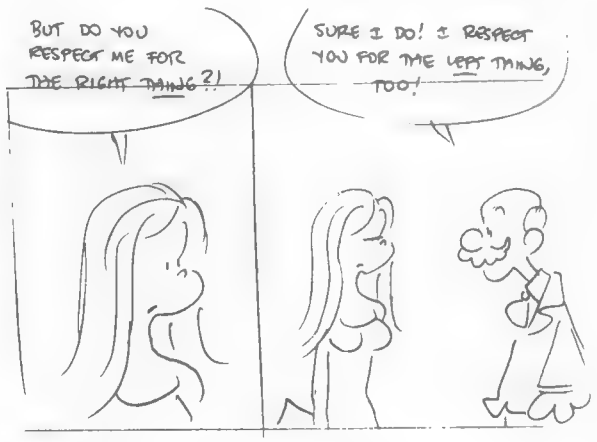
Brian Walker: *I remember you saying recently you really had a lot of fun doing the college gags, when Beetle was in college. And when Beetle was in college he could have a romantic interest, and in the Army, it just doesn't seem to work. Do you have any regrets about that?*

Walker: Well, from an artistic standpoint, not that I'm an artist, but I enjoyed doing the arches, and the ivy, and the shadows across the campus, which you can't do in the Army, because you can't dress up a barracks no matter how hard you try. Also, the clothing was a lot more colorful, and Beetle wore a black sweater with a big R on it, which sort of made him the center of attention. Now I do all my blacks and in the backgrounds of all the barracks and things like that, which really is against all the artistic requirements, because your black is supposed to be the center of attention, not sideburns and accessories. It sort of directs the eye to the wrong things. And I loved the colorful clothes that college kids wore.

Marschall: *I think it was Al Capp who said that on commentary in the strips, you can't draw a cartoon of a dog without making a comment on the dog.*

Walker: I've used that quote very often.
Marschall: *Have you had the temptation through the years . . . for instance, during Vietnam, was the temptation there to comment on that, or was it poison, that you had to stay away from it?*
Walker: I got into it a little bit, but every time I do I get my wings clipped.
Marschall: *By whom?*
Walker: By editors. There was a time during the very first part of the Vietnam War when the hippies were out parading around with placards, and I just thought it would be interesting to show them picketing Camp Swampy. For about a week I did a whole bunch of picket gags, and showed Beetle's and Sarge's reaction to it. I got heaped on.
Marschall: *But even there, you weren't commenting on the war, you were commenting on the hippies, right?*
Walker: Well, they were out carrying anti-war slogans, and so forth. Rocky is still the dissident: he runs the underground newspaper in camp. I did one recently that probably got more mail than King Features had ever got on any comic strip. I commented that the Administration had cut down their contributions to libraries and schools, but they had increased the military expenditures. And the General's looking at these sad soldiers and is saying that somehow he felt that schools and libraries would help them more than more hardware. Of course, naturally, libraries and schools all over the country wrote and asked for permission to reprint. It was on the cover of the *Wilson Library Magazine*, and a number of other library magazines. The library staff of Podunk somewhere sent me a tremendous blowup of a photograph of them holding up a sign that says, "Thank You, Beetle Bailey." These were good comments, you know, but I also got a number of newspapers and people calling me and saying, "Why did you do this? It's not like you to be political." And I wrote back and said I had that gag a long time before I used it. I said I thought it was more comment than humor, and I was hesitant to use it.
Marschall: *Well, why did you hesitate? I mean, it's a good gag in that it . . .*
Walker: I didn't think it was that good a gag. It was more of a comment.
Marschall: *So you did it to make a point.*
Walker: Yeah, I just looked at it one day, and I said, "Heck, I feel like making that comment."
Brian Walker: I think it's more poignant for a strip like *Beetle*, which isn't that political, and doesn't have that much social comment in it, to occasionally have something like that, so you don't feel like you're being beaten over the head with it. Occasionally there is a social comment.
Walker: I think *Beetle* is full of constant comment. You know, I'm always making fun of bureaucracy and the system.
Brian Walker: *It's not a preachy comic strip, though.*
Walker: Well, you know, that's the kind of comment I like to make, you know, ambivalent and bilateral. One of the things is that you want as broad as possible a readership as you can get, and it isn't going to help you a bit to say that Reagan's a jerk, because a lot of people who think that he's a saint are going to hate you, so you've lost half your readership right there.
Brian Walker: Or maybe only 20 per cent.
Walker: You stay out of it, you Democrat! (*laughter*)
Marschall: *So you keep them guessing.*
Walker: Well, if you can—well, like, *Blondie* is a comment on food, and children, and bosses and things like that. And those are safe comments, because everybody has those experiences. But they're still comments. It's Al Capp's dog again.
Marschall: *Sometimes—I've always wanted to ask you this—sometimes the strip is very visual, and it builds strongly on characters and personalities, and every once in a while—I don't know if you do it by a quota system, or if you just had a wild Monday idea session or something—but you really go into the realm of slapstick. You know, Laurel and Hardy routines, something like that.*
Walker: I get a feeling every now and then that I'm not being funny enough.
Marschall: *And that'll put that dose back in.*
Walker: There's always a tendency to be a little pompous and wise, and try to get wisdom in your strip, that kind of thing. Every now and then I try to remember the advice that Ernie Bushmiller gave me. It was "dumb it down, dumb it down." And that was his formula for success on *Nancy*. Everybody could understand it. All the funny pictures, the very understandable gags. Every now and then I said, "Gee, we ought to get more slapstick humor in the strip." Win back all those readers that I'm losing by trying to be intellectual.
Marschall: *Well, between that, and politics where you may not want to tread or something like that, is there anything that you've really wanted to do in* Beetle *that maybe you keep putting to the top of the back pile, where someday you'll tread the area, or introduce that character?*

EDITOR'S NOTE AT PRESS TIME: We have just learned that Mort Walker has scheduled release of his new book, Thirty Years With Beetle Bailey, *for April, 1984. It will be published by Comicana Publishing and distributed by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. For information please write to the Museum of Cartoon Art, Comly Ave., Rye Brook, N.Y.*



Self-censored: **Through the years Walker's gag sessions with assistants Bud Jones, Jerry Dumas, Bob Gustafson, Frank Johnson, and Greg Walker have resulted in horseplay and joking—such as regularly including gags such as these in suggestion piles to crack up fellow artists. They usually do.**

HELLO, MOTHER BAILEY
HI, MOM. IS BROTHER HOME ON HIS FURLOUGH YET?
BEETLE! HI AND LOIS ARE HERE TO SEE YOU
4-12
HE DIDN'T ANSWER. MAYBE HE'S OUT
YES, HE'S OUT, ALL RIGHT
I TRIED TO WAKE HIM YESTERDAY
THE ARMY HASN'T CHANGED HIM MUCH
I THINK HE SNORES LOUDER
DON'T HE LOOK NATURAL ?!

Enter HI and Lois in their first incarnation. *Beetle Bailly* for April 12, 1954.

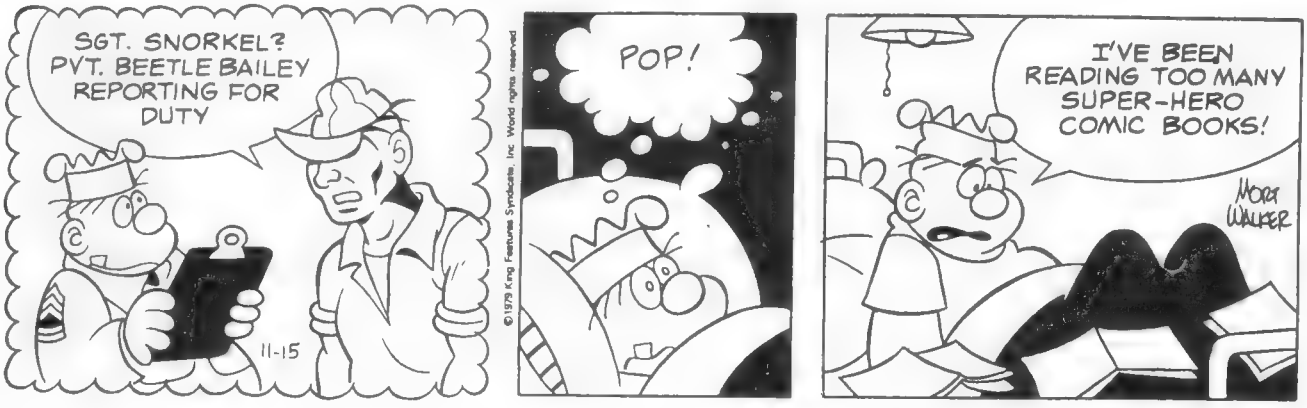
Walker: I don't think so. I've always had the philosophy that I can do anything at all I want to with that space. You know, it's my space, and I can have fun with it. And if I have fun, the reader's going to have fun. You'll see when you read my book *Thirty Years With Beetle Bailey* all the real wild things I've done—layouts, the Lt. Flap marching thing that was very rhythmic, with funny-looking panels, the dream sequences of Sarge where I made fun of televison shows like *Bonanza* and *Batman*, unusual layouts where I only have 20 pictures of Sarge's head.

Brian Walker: *You have experimented with continuity, like someone goes home on furlough and they bring Sarge with them, and things that you normally stay away from in the strip. Did you ever think of experiments, like using continuity in* Beetle Bailey, *or even a grander experiment like* Sam's Strip, *where today people are a little bit more aware of comics as an art form? I think* Sam's Strip *could be a big success today.*

Walker: I don't know. But I have, you know, little private jokes, like, well, when *Sam's Strip* met its demise, I had Beetle and Sarge walking along the street, and here was Sam and Silo out there selling pencils for five cents a piece. They just passed them by. No comment at all, they were just looking for new work.

Marschall: *In the* Beetle Bailey *strip you did that?*

Continued: **For several years Walker injected doses of continuity, with the soldiers' furloughs.**


SGT. SNORKEL? PVT. BEETLE BAILEY REPORTING FOR DUTY
11-15
©1979 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved
POP!
I'VE BEEN READING TOO MANY SUPER-HERO COMIC BOOKS!
MORT WALKER

Walker: In the *Beetle Bailey* strip, yeah. I had forgotten about that one. And I just did one recently for *Hi and Lois* where they're talking about the colors of the leaves on the trees, and a little kid just said they felt sorry for all the people who don't have leaves. So Hi said, "Why don't you send them some?" So all the kids began gathering leaves, some for the Eskimos, and some for the people who live in the desert, and one said here's one for Uncle Beetle in the Army. And Hi said, "Why?," and he said, "The last time he was home he said he didn't have enough leaves." So, you know, there's a kind of private... Uncle Beetle they call him... so there again, I think insiders who know that Hi and Lois started in *Beetle Bailey* might get an extra kick out of that.

Marschall: *She is Beetle's sister. The strips I just saw, before* Hi and Lois *was launched—she had dark hair then, and Hi looked a little different. Was that another husband, and she just walked out on that guy?*

Walker: It was just that I brought them in as minor characters, and when I realized I was going to do a whole strip on these people, I reevaluated the whole family and their kids and their looks and everything. But, you know, she still remained Beetle's sister, with blonde hair instead of black hair.

Marschall: *I'd like to follow up on something Brian said. One of my current hobbyhorses is that strips in the '30s, which we call the golden age, even humor strips, were continuity at the same time, and it worked. I think it worked creatively because it read well, and it also served the function of having the people come back and buy the paper to see what was happening. Even* Blondie *was a continuity strip for a while. It stopped in the '50s. You were one of the premier exponents of the gag-a-day strip.*

Walker: I started *Beetle* as a continuity strip.

Marschall: *Did you really?*

Walker: And Sylvan said "No, no, we were buying a gag-a-day strip." But you'll find that the first week of *Beetle*, when he gets in the bus and is going to college and meets freshmen, is one week of continuity. And Sylvan said, "That's all the continuity, no more. Get him there, get him into college, then gag-a-day."

Marschall: *So you conceived it as a—*

Walker: And I've done occasional, like Brian says...the one where Sarge was on a diet. He got very thin. I guess he finally gave up his diet, but he was in the Weight-Watchers' society, the Fat-Watchers, I think we called it. I've done a number of those. In *Hi and Lois* I did one where the father came to live with them. I did one where Hi gave up smoking. But Sylvan was always very much against continuity. And the smoking sequence with Hi, I think lasted three weeks. He made me cut it down to two weeks, so I had to throw out a week's work. But I think the main reason you start doing gag-a-day, it's tough on the competition who are doing sequence things, because the sequence things are never as funny. To move the story along you may have to do certain gags that maybe aren't as good as they should be, but they have to be in there. There just aren't going to be that many funny gags, so your competition is out there doing gag-a-day. So people are going to start saying, "Aw, this isn't as funny as it used to be." And I have that feeling every now and then when I see guys trying continuity, it's the truth, you just can't be as funny, day by day. And if you don't like the premise, you're not going to read it at all.

Brian Walker: *There's a lot of humor strips like* Motley's Crew, Peanuts, Doonesbury, *that use like a weekly or two-week kind of series. It's not really continuity.*

Walker: *Motley's Crew* is on that thing right now; they're going to Washington.

Marschall: *But even in* Motley's Crew, *regularly they happen to be in a factory, in one location...*

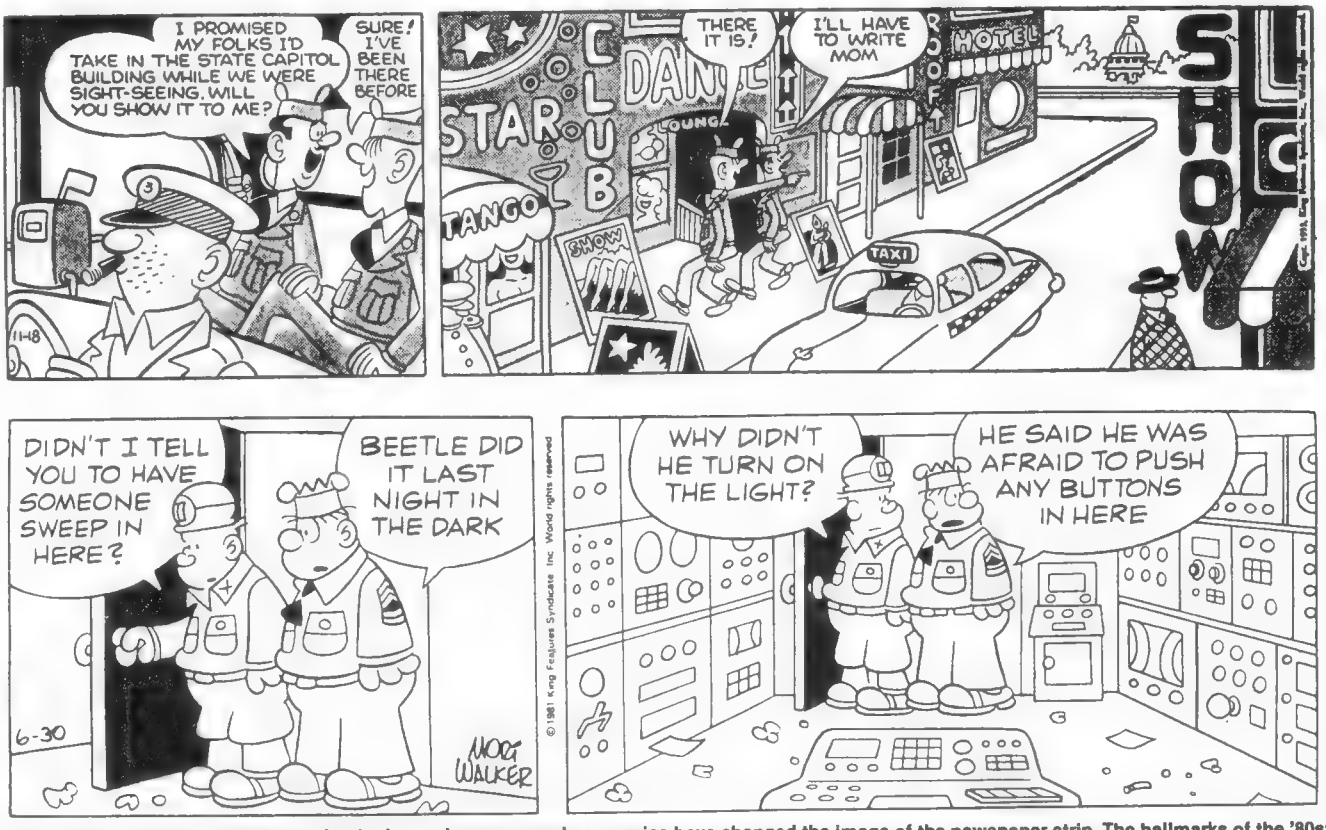
Walker: Often it turns out to be the same gag every day done differently, which is a mistake.

Marschall: *But that's not the problem with the form, it might be the problem with the artist or writer.*

Walker: Sometimes, even as well as I like *Peanuts*, when (Schulz) gets going on something I don't like, I just turn off on it, and I think, I've got to put up with this for a whole week? Ordinarily I love the strip, even though he does a lot of continuity. But I think I love the strip in spite of it. I would much rather he just did gags every day. And I don't know, my wife was always telling me, "Don't ever try to do what *Peanuts* is doing, or *Doonesbury*, just do your own thing. It's a mistake to even compare yourself with them, or even attempt to do what they're doing. Just go on and be yourself."

Marschall: *To the larger question of where newspaper strips are going today,* Beetle's *about in the saturation point, but if you were starting now instead of starting 30 years ago, would you be sanguine about the business, the number of papers, the respect that editors are giving comics?*

Walker: I think there's a different sense of this—the best of times, the worst of times. It was considered a real bad time when I came into the comic strip business. In fact, it was about a week after I had started my strip that I went to a National Cartoonists' Society meeting, and Hal Foster got up and gave a speech about the demise of the comics, how editors hate comics and are trying to get rid of them. They're running them smaller and smaller, and he says that in a couple of years you won't see comics in the paper at all. And here I was, I had just sold a strip and I'd been all excited about it, and I went home in tears, just about. I called Sylvan the next day and said, "Is this true what Hal Foster was saying?" and I told him. And he said, "Mort, throughout the ages there have always been prophets of doom. Just go back and do your strip. It'll work out, don't you worry." And the grand successes we've had in the last 10 years with *Hagar*, and *Garfield*, and *Doonesbury*, and a number of other strips that have sold very


I PROMISED MY FOLKS I'D TAKE IN THE STATE CAPITOL BUILDING WHILE WE WERE SIGHT-SEEING. WILL YOU SHOW IT TO ME?
SURE! I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE
11-8
STAR CLUB
DANCE
LOUNGE
TANGO
SHOW
THERE IT IS!
I'LL HAVE TO WRITE MOM
MOTEL
SOFT
TAXI
SHOW
DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO HAVE SOMEONE SWEEP IN HERE?
BEETLE DID IT LAST NIGHT IN THE DARK
6-30
MORT WALKER
© 1981 King Features Syndicate Inc World rights reserved
WHY DIDN'T HE TURN ON THE LIGHT?
HE SAID HE WAS AFRAID TO PUSH ANY BUTTONS IN HERE

Tale of three decades: **Declining technologies and newspapers' economies have changed the image of the newspaper strip. The hallmarks of the '80s: less detail, no shading, larger lettering...**

well. It shows there's still opportunity there.

Marschall: *Well, maybe I'm a doomsayer, but when Foster made his speech, there were still 16-page Sunday comics, and* Prince Valiant *was still a full page, and papers may have been merging then, but not going out of business at the rate they are today.*

Walker: Well, things change. Although Dik Browne said the other day, "Mort, you've got to be willing to change with the shifts of the tide. You can't go through life in a straight line—they've got it mined." (*laughter*) Well, you're saying they had 16-page comic supplements, and each comic was a page. There's still just as many comics in the paper, running in a smaller size. So there's still just as many opportunities to be a comic strip artist, and to be in the paper, as there was then. You don't get as much space, but people don't have as much time. If you had a 16-page comic supplement with full pages, nobody would be reading it, because they don't have the time to read all that stuff.

Brian Walker: *Too busy playing video games.*

Walker: I think that you can get across the same idea oftentimes in six panels and 40 words, that back in the old days, looking at that old *Winnie Winkle* strip, I counted up the words and there was something like 400 words in that, as opposed to the 40 words you might find today. And you get just as big a laugh.

Marschall: *You get just as big a laugh, but a lot of those laughs are from people who grew up with the larger comics, remembering them, and they stayed with them out of loyalty. I guess this is what I'm driving at: Mort Walker growing up in El Dorado, Kansas, was turned on to comics because they were larger than life, the colors were great, the sections were thick,* Moon Mullins *was a story that could keep you going besides a gag-a-day—to get back to that point—but if you were growing up today, and there were five strips crammed on a Sunday page, of course it may be the same joke, but it's just not as large as life, it's just not as exciting.*

Walker: I agree with you. I'd love to see the comics run large and have them easy to see, with the room to do a lot of great drawing in it, but it's a fact of life that it's too expensive, and newspaper editors aren't going to do it, so we've had to learn how to adapt our drawing and our idea-work to fit the requirements of today's realistic world. You know, we're all survivors. I'm not about to resist it, because there's a good chance to be had. So, you know, we learn how to live with it.

Marschall: *Another side to the coin, in Europe the way they cope with this was coming up with the graphic novel. And you've told me, you've done a few of these for Scandinavia and really had a ball, having a larger scope, and more pages, and sub-plots and all that to fill. Are you still doing that?*

Walker: I just finished my fifth one. I really did enjoy it, because I've got a full-page, many panels to work with. I can combine the panels and make big splash panels, and I've got large scenes of the camp, and I've got hikes in the country with all kinds of scenery and things like that. And I am able to develop the characters and see them in a different way than I can in the daily or Sunday strip, because you can really develop a lot of sympathy for somebody. One of the stories sees Sarge deposed, they're bringing in another sergeant, and you can see all the guys gloating, saying, "Boy, that guy's really good-looking, we're going to have a good sergeant for a change." And Sarge is dejected and rejected, and several people told me when they read it it brought a tear to their eye. But you need room to develop all that, and then you've got to bring him back. You can't leave him on the end of a Sunday page, you know, weeping in his room. You've got end on a high note, you know, so you don't have room to depose him and

SIGN THAT, WILL YOU, IGNATZ?
"I, IGNATZ MOUSE, AGREE TO THROW NO MORE BRICKS IF SAM AGREES TO THROW NO MORE BRICKS"
dumas 10-2
HO, WHY SHOULD I SIGN THIS? I'M THE ONLY ONE WHAT THROWS A BRICK. I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
ZIP
POW
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
SIGN
WHERE?
WHILE ALL THESE OLD COMIC CHARACTERS ARE HERE, I'D SURE LIKE TO USE THEM IN MY STRIP
SAM..
5-1
dumas
IT'LL TAKE SOME THINKING, BUT I CAN PROBABLY WORK THEM IN SOMEHOW
SAM...
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
A PERSON WITH MY INTELLIGENCE AND IMAGINATION SHOULD BE ABLE TO THINK OF SOME WAY!

Two examples of the innovative *Sam's Strip*—an insider's comic strip that many critics consider too early (1961—63) for its time. The art was drawn by the multi-talented Jerry Dumas, author, cartoonist, *New Yorker* artist, and creator of the children's book and newspaper feature *Rabbits Rafferty*.

bring him back all in six panels. But if I do 35 pages, there's a lot of room to work with, and I've really enjoyed doing that. I find that I'm drawing a lot more, and I'm enjoying drawing again for a change, because I'm not cramped into the little panels that I have.

Marschall: *And good production values, too. Are these stories out of your Monday sessions, or. . .*

Walker: No, I do these all myself, and I write them as I go. I start off with the first page with sort of an idea as to what I want to do, and maybe an idea for a subplot in between. I work and write as I go, and then I come to the next page, and I go, Now what do I do. After a while, after I've done three or four pages, I think, Now I've got to bring in another plot. I just can't keep going on doing this same thing for 45 pages. I have to develop a sub-plot now, something that will fit in with the other one. And then, hopefully before the end, all mesh together into the denouement.

Marschall: *On the right page.*

Walker: On the right page. So what I do, I usually have about 20 or 30 pages so I know where I'm going, then I skip over and I write the end of it, so I know how much I have to fill in. That's the way I've been doing it. Now I usually do this up in Vermont, where the phone isn't ringing, and nobody's bothering me, because it's like playing chess, or putting together a Chinese jigsaw puzzle, because all these things are in your mind, and you try to keep them all working together, and the phone rings, and it's blank, you know, it's all out of your head.

Marschall: *Will those books be appearing here?*

Walker: Since we do them all in English I've been trying to encourage King Features to go out and try to get a publisher. If we can't get a great publisher, we might use our own publishing house.

Marschall: *There's the comic shop market too. The latest estimate I've heard about the number of stores is that it's up around 3500.*

Walker: They don't go for my kind of stuff, though. I had to learn the hard way that there are. . .

Marschall: *Yes and no. I think it might be different if it was a story that they could get into.*

Walker: Most of the people who go to those shops and buy there are superhero fans, and they like slick figures and monsters and the netherworld and fantasy, and stuff that when I wake up in the morning I try to forget. (*laughter*)

Marschall: *To an extent that's true. This is a question you must get all the time, but have you seen yourself as a character in one of your strips, or all of the strips?*

Walker: Well, I think I appear there in several garbs. Originally Beetle Bailey was a friend of mine, a college friend, a high-school friend, and after a while, just naturally, I became Beetle Bailey. Then at one time I wanted to create a new character—that's the way I stay alive in my work, I bring in a new character once in a while, once every year or once every two years, gives me new ideas and new springboards for relationships and everything. And I felt the need for a new character, and I thought of myself when I became a lieutenant, coming into this infantry company, all imbued with the spirit they give you when you're in OCS, and coming up to this grizzled old career sergeant and saying, "Okay, Sarge, let's get this place in order now." You know, "What are those books doing over there, what's that trash doing on the floor?" And he

just looks up at me and goes, "Aw c'mon, lieutenant." He wasn't going to put up with this fuzzy-cheeked kid that was 20 years old, and I was an officer, and I was very proud of it. Well, I finally figured out what my place was, and I had to laugh at myself one time when I was overseas. I was in charge of Prisoner of War camps in Italy, and here were all these battle-hardened veterans, you know, they weren't Nazis, just Germans, mostly transportation corps and that type of thing, and the German commandant was a major, and he came to me one time and asked for some kind of favor for the men, and I said, "No, I couldn't do that for you," and he says, "Why not?" I got mad at him, and I kind of stomped my foot and said, "Because you lost the war, darn it!' (*laughter*) Anyway, I thought that was a funny relationship, this neophyte coming in with all these grizzled old sergeants, so I created Lt. Fuzz, based on me, so for a while I was thinking back on my own experiences and my own ineptness and shallowness.

Marschall: *It took a lot to do that. I think Sarge is a more sympathetic character than Lt. Fuzz.*

Walker: Oh, Lt. Fuzz is not a sympathetic character. He's a sycophant, and a jerk, and something that begins with P. (*laughter*) You know, he's the guy that everybody loves to hate. He's always trying to get on the good side of the general.

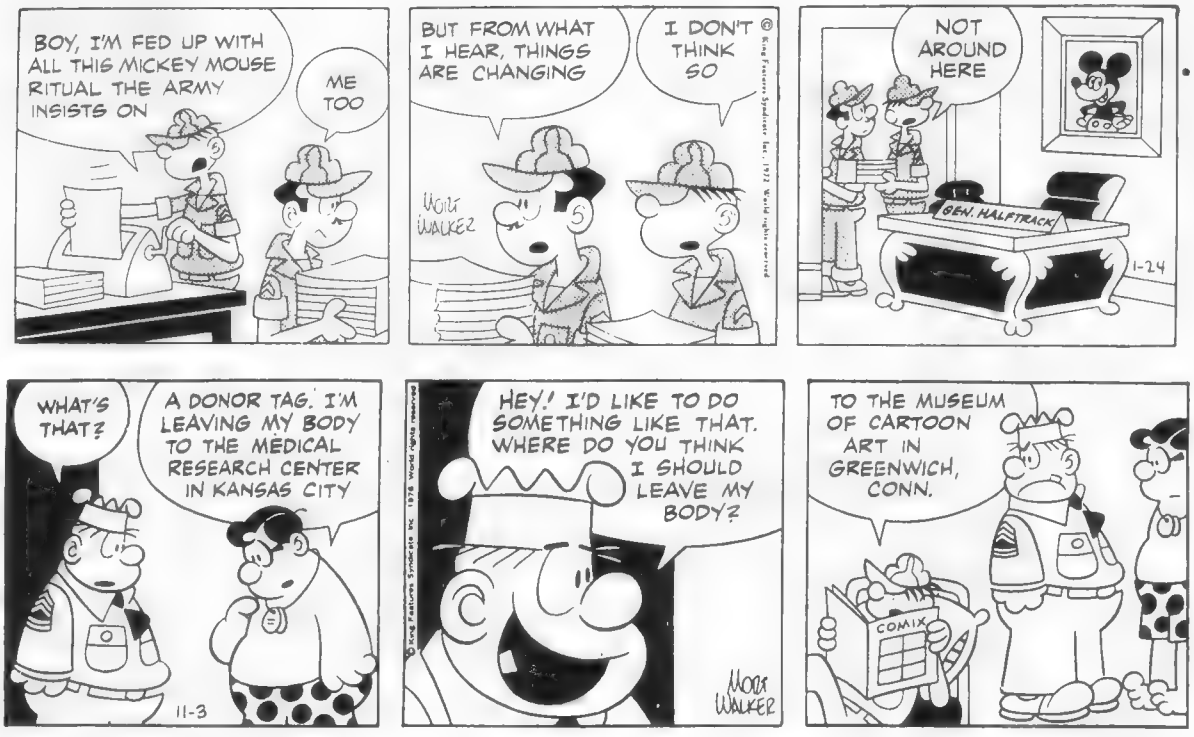
Brian Walker: *Sort of a Frank Burns character.*

Walker: So I think he's a funny character, but he's not lovable at all. But over the years, I think I've sort of fallen into the General Halftrack role. I think I am now General Halftrack.

Brian Walker: *In fact, he wears little pajamas with little stripes and stars on them.*

Marschall: *I'd like to ask about the Museum of Cartoon Art, which to me is an extension of your young fan days, just having the resources and more organization than probably just about any other cartoonist in America to see this project through. I'd like to talk about that a bit.*

Walker: Well, it's another one of those things that sort of almost accidentally grew, as far as my participation in it. Originally it started out as a project of the National Cartoonists' Society, and we had a big committee. I served on it with Caniff, you know, all the great cartoonists of the day. And we travelled down to Washington, and we talked to senators, and we went to all the foundations. And it just seemed like we'd be having meetings and meetings, and nothing ever happened. And finally, the committee just sort of dissolved and disappeared, and I'd been sort of working with Art Wood on it, and pretty soon I realized that Art Wood hadn't done anything either, so I got kind of discouraged about it. But one day I was having dinner with the president of King Features, and I said, "You know, the Hearst Foundation really ought to support our cartoon museum idea. You know, Hearst really began the comics, and he profited a great deal from them. And I just think it would be entirely appropriate if they gave us some money," and he agreed with me! So the next thing I knew—it took about a year—but we got about fifty thousand dollars from the William Randolph Hearst foundation. That was Milton Kaplan. Later on when Milton Kaplan died, Joe D'Angelo arranged another fifty thousand dollars, so that gave us our seed money to get started with. And, you know, we were all very excited in the beginning, but we had some really depressing, discouraging times, where we all sat around and cried. After sweating and actually physically—Brian and Chuck—scraping down the walls of the building we were renting, and painting everything and rebuilding everything and putting money into fire systems and fire walls, and publicizing the thing all over the world, with stationery and T-shirts


BOY, I'M FED UP WITH ALL THIS MICKEY MOUSE RITUAL THE ARMY INSISTS ON
ME TOO
BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR, THINGS ARE CHANGING
I DON'T THINK SO
MORT WALKER
NOT AROUND HERE
GEN. HALFTRACK
1-24
WHAT'S THAT?
A DONOR TAG. I'M LEAVING MY BODY TO THE MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER IN KANSAS CITY
11-3
HEY! I'D LIKE TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT. WHERE DO YOU THINK I SHOULD LEAVE MY BODY?
MORT WALKER
TO THE MUSEUM OF CARTOON ART IN GREENWICH, CONN.
COMIX

and whatever, the owner decided not to renew our lease. We were too busy for him. I guess he expected it would be kind of a warehouse for cartoons, and not a museum where people came. Schoolbuses, and hordes of kids, and so forth. And so, he just wouldn't renew our lease, and I had to come in that day and tell these guys who had put their life's blood into that building, and all of our hopes and everything, and we all cried. And there have been many discouragements like that. So we decided to look around for castles, and that was discouraging, because everything was three to four hundred thousand dollars, and we didn't have any money. By this time we had spent everything. Then, almost by accident, my son's girlfriend, now his wife, said, "How about that old Ward castle, about a block away from where I grew up, up on the top of the hill?" That was very discouraging too, because of negotiating with the owner, who died, and then negotiating with the bank, and waiting for a year or so, and then getting in and having to clean up the rubble, because everything was just coming apart, as you know. But you put in some work over there, didn't you? You know, everyone pitched in, and cleared that rubble out of there and started painting and shining up the wood and everything.

Brian Walker: To me, that was the most satisfying experience in all that 10-odd years of trying to work on the museum, that couple-of-months period where it was almost like a rebirth, you know, and everybody was over there scraping and dusting and vacuuming. We had a couple of days where we had 30 or 40 people over there. The place really had a transformation in that couple of months. The place went from something that looked almost like a gothic novel, into a place where, you know, we had our first opening party and everybody's in tuxedos and we had the lights down low, so you couldn't see the holes in the ceiling.

Walker: My heart was pounding that night! I drove down the road, and my first sight of the castle, all lit up with lights on the outside at night, and this was our opening party, my heart was just pounding like a drum. I really was so excited about that.

Brian Walker: In retrospect, I think the biggest asset we had was our naivete. If we knew what it involved, we never would have done it. But once it was started, it was already on the road, and we couldn't turn back.

Walker: We had some real tough times in there where we didn't have any money. I had to put up all the money, and my wife was objecting to it, and saying, you know, "Maybe nobody wants this thing, maybe you're the only one who wants it." She said, "Maybe you ought to give it up." But you know, once you're committed to a trust, that people have given you drawings and they've given you money, and they expect you to finish it out, you just have to go ahead. And as painful as it was sometimes to do all these things, now I'm happy I did it, because we've got a lot of support. Almost everybody is helping us out now, and everybody seems to want it, the public as well as the cartoonists and the community. I don't know if I've completely succeeded, but I had thought comics were an art form, and I had loved comics, and maybe I've imposed that on the public, you know, to my own limited effect. But I was bitten by the bug when I went to Europe, and saw how much they revered comics and cartoons over there. Well, why are our comics more respected over there than they are here, in our own country? So we thought something ought to be done about it, especially before everything was gone and destroyed, because the syndicates were burning up all of these originals.

Marschall: *Let's just bring it full circle and ask a last question: Are there any more strips that are lurking in there that are coming out, that you're planning to do or wanting to do?*

Walker: I've been working with Brian a little bit on one he will do, if he ever gets going on it. Then I have another idea that's more of a merchandising gimmick that we might do also, I don't know if I should mention it or not, but it's a combination of *Felix the Cat* and *Betty Boop* together, in one strip, with Betty Boop as a famous Broadway actress who hangs around with beautiful people and, you know, mentions Andy Warhol and Elizabeth Taylor coming to parties, things like that. And Felix is the one who sits on the side and makes comments.

Marschall: *Thank you for your time and your thoughts. And—through things like the Museum—your efforts on behalf of comics and their heritage.* n

Chronicles of George and Josie:

The Bungle Family's Little Glories of Inanity

By Donald Phelps

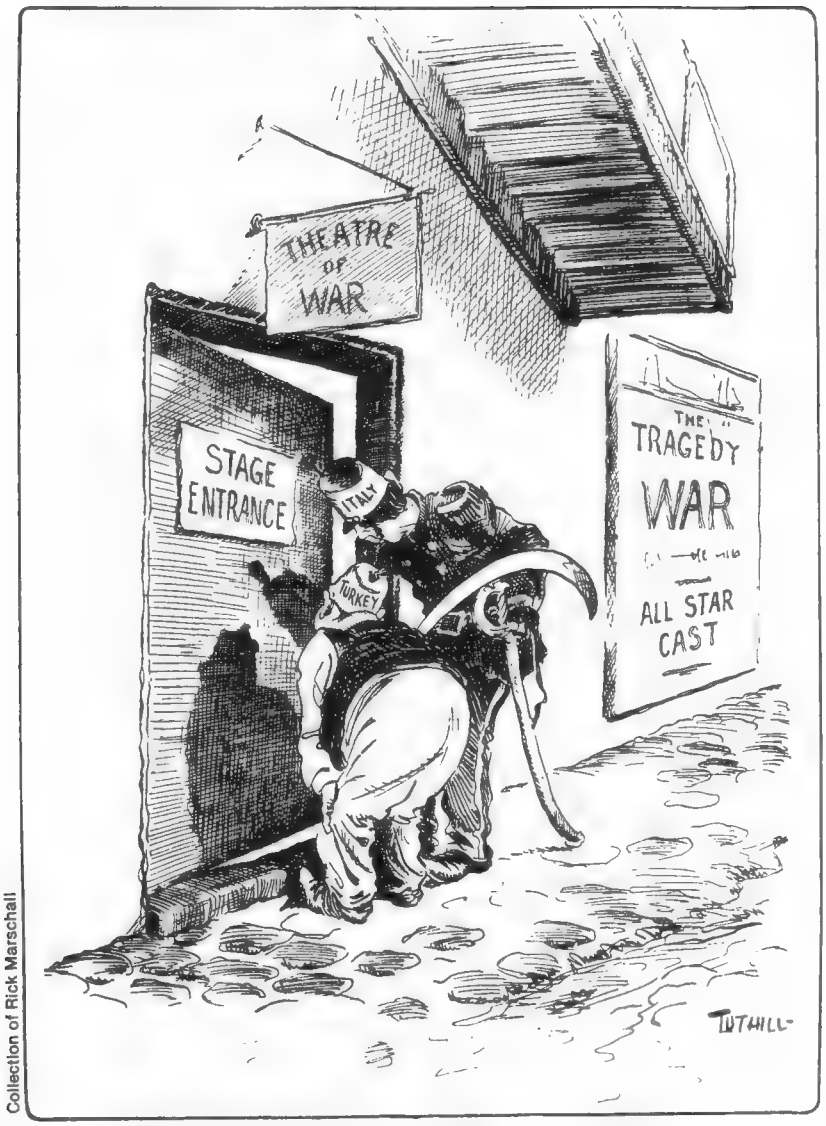
Little Orphan Annie's true parents are, of course, alive and known to the general public, among which they could be seen for some three decades, leading what often seemed a semi-fugitive existence, watching and being watched by their neighbors; following various Grimm's Fairy Tale trails in pursuit of wealth, status and honor, and, between times, prowling through the chambers of their apartment at Sunken Heights—a dwelling which might be pardonably confused with a nautilus shell's interior, or Kafka's Burrow; beseeching, or thunderously demanding, that the universe witness their afflictions, of which Exhibit A was their being married to each other.

In all these respects—especially as spies and eccentrics, fevered diarists of the world at large—George and Josie Bungle, of Harry J. Tuthill's *The Bungle Family*, proclaimed their bloodline to Orphan Annie, that bleak little newscaster, as well as considerable ties to George Herriman's beleaguered modern-day Crusoes, *The Dingbat Family*. They had as much to do as the protagonists of either contemporary strip with an American middle-class sense of style, which Tuthill, like Herriman, perceived as an always somewhat frantic clutching at whatever G-strings, towels and patchwork remainders could be furnished from one's fantasy capacity, and memories of better days. And they made their day-to-day last-ditch stand, their ongoing Alamo against neighbors, bill collectors, cops, and highly combustible perfect strangers, with a mixture of plentiful venom, addled gallantry, and withering melancholia that would have done their Ungentle Annie proud.

STEADY WINDY! OPEN YOUR MOUTH SO I CAN GET THIS SCREWDRIVER IN AND HIT IT A COUPLE OF TIMES WITH THE HAMMER. STEADY...ONCE MORE! MISSED IT AGAIN! STEADY....AH! THAT WAS A GOOD SOLID JOLT. I FELT SOMETHING GIVE.

A FEEF! FEEF! OH, OH, OH! A FOOF OOSE!
WHAT'S THAT AGAIN? FEEF? OH! I LOOSENED YOUR TEETH? WELL, ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN WINDY.
OH OH OH! AND LOOK AT HIS FACE FROM PRYING IN IT WITH THAT BENT SCREWDRIVER! OH!

Collection of Rick Marschall



Collection of Rick Marschall

Stage Struck

One of Tuthill's attractive political cartoons, ca. 1915, from the *St. Louis Star*.

Increasingly, over the years, *The Bungle Family* expressed a flexible-steel perception of American romanticism from inside out, not even equalled by *The Gumps* with its lavish reviews of Victorian plot-lines involving besieged maidens, vulturish bankers, and philandering counts. Sidney Smith's imagination loved, even while smiling, to fondle the warm sable lining of romance which he supposed underlay the plain serge of daily Americana. As for the Bungles, however, what we see every day *is* the lining: The funny and apalling ways in which George and Josie's imaginations can shape their lives is never in any doubt, nor is remoteness from the imagination of Victorian novelists, save in the Bungles'—and their neighbors and relatives'—untiring postures of indignation, injured dignity, aristocratic scorn. Visually, they are cut to the pattern set by the Gumps, with a probable eye cocked to Bud Fisher's Augustus Mutt and his "M'Love." But their black hair—George's curls and Josie's puffs—combined with their operatic marchings and arm-flailings give them a European look which is augmented somehow by the deadness of their backgrounds. Tuthill's vinegary lines, his flat colors and scanty use of shadows, as well as the cold, remote spaces in which the Bungles usually found themselves engulfed (you could fairly hear the echoes in that apartment) produced a gauntness of architecture and crazy-comic, faintly dream-like solemnity compared with which Di Chirico might seem to be staging a series of Mardi Gras galas.

I am always struck by the animosity accorded Tuthill's drawing style, even by alert and sympathetic critics like Coulton Waugh (who compared it, in terms of the strip's pleasures, to eating ice cream with a sore throat) and Bill Blackbeard, who enlisted such adjectives as "grubby." I have always found myself refreshed by Tuthill's freedom from the conventional dexterities of comic strip shorthand, and grateful for his translation of what must have begun as awkwardness and maladroitness into a vocabulary of space and line which contained what he had to say about his characters' relationships to each other and to their real and imagined worlds. Barren of any sensuous delights, the spidery line conveys a fascination as hypnotic as the more sophisticated bareness of *Little Orphan Annie*, of potential animation in the dead looking surfaces, from which may spring the impromptu, dippy choreographies of George's occasional sidewalk battles with bill-posters and strolling contortionists. The stiffness produces some marvelous images of vacuous pride: Spike or beak-like noses atilt—as though the adjacent world were a sulphur swamp—eyes closed, shoulders high.

The *space* becomes a virtual character in *The Bungle Family*, the Bungles' major antagonist, which they seem to be combating even during afternoons at home when they register their degree of marital harmony by walking counter-motion to each other: Josie striding, cougar-like, with folded arms, George executing a unique walk, somewhere between a stalk and a strut as though secretly practicing the Ubi mating dance: one raised fist or pointed finger menacing the heavens. They are surrounded by open doors, which, unlike the glowering alcoves of *Little Orphan Annie*, open not into darkness but merely into the hermetic grimness of other, *similar* rooms, while the windows open on adjoining wings of the apartment house, any prospect of which makes San Quentin appear a Louisa May Alcott reverie. George and Josie are continually peering through these windows at the cryptic or titillating performances of their neighbors, whom we can glimpse, fleetingly, through the Bungles' window-frame and the vistas of their shoulders.

But what Tuthill's vacuous-looking, delicately sinister, droll draughtsmanship accomplishes above all is to portray middle-class Americans as autonomous entertainers, and their imagination as an agent at once of ballooning hope and squashing frustration. American comic strips have always provided a gallery of artists taking shies at delusions of wealth, athletic skill, erotic prowess; but I doubt that very many of them have presented Imagination as the self-goading, often enough self-defeating, yet unquenchable *energy* which Tuthill portrays. Neither have any managed to embody it, as Tuthill does, in characters' personalities. Especially in the recurrently frenzied, chronically disorder-prone George. As in other instances, the nearest parallel I call to mind is that of George Herriman's *The Dingbat Family*, which began, on June 21st of 1910, as an approximation of Bud Fisher's and T.E. Power's domestic cacophonies, but soon settled—unsettled—into a Pepys's diary of domestic paranoia, with Mr. Dingbat clamoring for his rights—ill-considered and worse-rewarded—from every quarter of his daily experience. The first

manifestations of the *The Family Upstairs* showed the hemstiching of the Dingbats' patchwork gentility, vs. the uproarious chaos of the ungenteel, unhousebreakable world outside their apartment domain. Meanwhile, the cellar—the lower margin of the strip—was being taken over by a cat and mouse, eventually to be identified as Krazy and Ignatz.

I have no doubt at all that Harry Tuthill's temperament and imagination took ready impress from *The Dingbat Family*: certain "childhood friends" of the Bungles, the E. Pluribus Dowdys, bear the name, slightly transmuted, of the original Dingbat couple, who retreated within the year to just plain Minnie and Dinny. But Herriman's influences, such as they were, are placed in relief by Tuthill's originality, which presented from his X-Ray-like reduction of the Bungles and their terrain. You don't get humorous and erotic juice which ripples like a benign lava through Herriman's ragtag-element drawing style (a perfect counterpart) as he described the Dingbats' own desperate improvisations against the Family Upstairs, their increasingly giddy excursions at smoking the Family into the open, of the exquisite seeming-makeshift improvisations that he adored in Chaplin. It is style evolving and justifying itself, out of an aparent nothing.

The Bungles reflect the Dingbats' capacity for breeding situations out of air; except that the Bungles' air is the chill middle air of obsession and bug-bear, all seen in the refrigerator light of Tuthill's composition and tone... the calamities and confusions which George and Josie were capable of spinning like silk-worms out of their guts. With most stereotypical married couples in comic strips from the 1910s through the 1930s, the awfulness is implicit, and safely interred, in a given situation. But with the Bungles it is a vital component of their joint energy, and informs the feckless, deranged quests which they pursued together. Tuthill had a falcon's eye for George and Josie's compulsive imprecision, landing their arrows a fair half-inch alongside the center-mark, geared as they are to encountering, and anticipating, theoretical events of all kinds, so that the *actual* is slightly out of focus. They are capable of exhausting a Sunday afternoon determining the correct spelling of "catatonia," or trying to determine the contents of a box, long consigned to the rear of a kitchen shelf, which are finally identified as sawdust ("Put some milk and sugar on it," is one of Josie's tentative suggestions). But, where Herriman makes the reader aware of the (minimally sentimental) love-and-creation elan in the Dingbats' actual and fabricated dilemmas, Tuthill makes us aware, above all, of the vacuity, of the way their fantasizing highlights the nullity at the center of George and Josie's shared life (many of the Sunday pages resemble syncopated charades of James's *The Beast in the Jungle*).

Harry Tuthill was one of the most deeply sardonic journalists of his day or many another; and never so much as when he showed the self-germinating futility of much that passes for taste and cultural heritage in contemporary life. A tenement child in Chicago during the late nineteenth century, a former newsboy, he displays little of the piety towards traditional culture (in the sense of: "Hands off, boys, this is bigger than us") which distinguishes so many of his contemporaries: meaning, not *dis*respect, or careless, anarchic disregard, but respect cut with irony. Both of the Bungles exhibit enormous pride in their articulateness and can expostulate at length (as, indeed, at only token invitation, can most of their associates) as if to unfurl scrolls of testimony for some cosmic Clerk of the Court to review. Their volubility, like that of Minnie and Dinny Dingbat, is part and parcel with their fantasy life.

But unlike Herriman's company it is laced with resin. "Oh, I understand now why my friends smile and shake their hands sadly, and say 'Poor Mrs. Bungle!'" exclaims Josie, whose aptitudes are those of a novelist *circa* Jane Austen. She can build little vignettes around

Why George Bungle looks the way he does. This is his father and model Harry Tuthill Done on commission for Reg McAdam of Ham (Tydwell
Harry
cats
Collection of Rick Marschall

Harry J. Tuthill (1886-1957), sketched by fellow McNaught Syndicate artist Ham Fisher in 1930. Born in Chicago, Tuthill once outlined his early career thusly: "(I) left...to work on and at such things as selling enlarged pictures, soliciting for a corn doctor, and for one delirious season carrying on with a medicine show. I would not mention these things except that I feel what may be a pardonable pride in their diversity." It may be said that he must have been filing mental notes for the outrageous character types he delineated in future years. He worked for the *St. Louis Star*, switching to the *Post-Dispatch* and then being hired again by his original paper in a publicized coup. For the *Star* he drew a strip called *Lafe*, about a lazy handyman, and achieved nationwide notice for his editorial cartoons. Around 1920 he switched to the *N.Y. Mail* and by 1925 one of his strips, *Home Sweet Home*, was syndicated by McNaught under its new title *The Bungle Family*. It had also taken the individual character of the samples in this article; previously it might have been mistaken for Briggs's *Mr. and Mrs.* The classic strip continued until 1945, the last few years syndicated by Tuthill himself. Seldom has there been a strip (*Moon Mullins* comes to mind) registering a sustained, masterful indictment of *petite-bourgeois* sensibilities and preoccupations as did *The Bungle Family*. —*Rick Marschall*

Home Sweet Home

BE SURE THE MOVING MEN TAKE EVERYTHING, GEORGE, AND YOU GO WITH THEM TO SHOW THEM THE WAY TO THE NEW FLAT.
FINE, JO!
YOU SAID 2143! THIS IS A FOUNDRY, SIR!
SO IT IS! OH WELL MISTAKES WILL HAPPEN. THE RIGHT NUMBER IS 1243.
FREE ONDERS
NE
G CO.
THIS CAN'T BE IT. EITHER. ARE YOU SURE IT'S 1243, MR. BUNGLE?
DID I SAY 1243? DOGGONIT! I MEANT 3124!
LONE
ING CO
HOW COME, BUDDY? HERE'S 3124! IT'S A VACANT LOT.
WELL NOW, WERE EVEN ON MISTAKES, BROTHER! YOU MISUNDERSTOOD ME THIS TIME. I'M POSITIVE I SAID 4321.
CLONE
YING CO.
HERE WE ARE 4321 IS IN THIS BLOCK. THERE ISN'T A HOUSE WITHIN HALF A MILE OF THIS PLACE
OH WELL THERE'S NO USE IN GETTING EXCITED, MY MAN. TURN AROUND AND WE'LL TRY 34—
CY CLONE MOVING CO.
THEN WHILE I WAS TRYING TO EXPLAIN, YOUR MEN DELIBERATELY THREW ME OFF THE SEAT. I'M TEN MILES OUT OF MY WAY AND IF YOU DON'T SEND A TAXI OUT HERE FOR ME I'LL SUE YOU FOR $50,000 AND—
HELLO! HELLO! HELLO!
PHONE

Collection of Rick Marschall

Already bearing the marks of a mordant *Vic and Sade* on paper, Tuthill's *Home Sweet Home* ran in the early '20s.

datrium like the waddle of the landlord's son, and Balzacian passages around a Bungle acquaintance, named Irene, who had cosmeticized her name from Eileen. "I see poor Irene, *nee* Eileen, trying to get out of the car," she remarks, as inexhaustible a newscaster as Little Orphan Annie, and, if anything, possessed of greater elan. Like the traditional wife-images of comic strips, radio, and television, she excels at bringing her husband to earth; Josie's distinction is that she feels no qualms about the suddeness of George's descent.

Josie supplies the ice, George the fire, in the relationship. Whereas Josie's commentaries and apologies are richly expositional, George's rhythms are vigilantly terse, as of a Continental Op perennially composing reports for The Old Man, or a war front journalist typing dispatches. As with Harold Gray's little vagrant, every experience, no matter in what state of consciousness, must be recorded. "Whoo! Couple of good lefts that donkey got together. Now, let's see. Where am I?" This reflection follows upon George's conference with a neighbor after erroneously introducing a doctor with a bill into the former's apartment. George's *style* is his armor, and, through it, he both fabricates and perpetually exonerates himself from adventurous crises. His speech amounts, in fact, to a picaresque novel which he may have commenced writing about himself the day he was born. The expostulation "What!" represents, for George, both an exclamation and a punctuation. Something more, perhaps, for the "what" is the object of continual search, the elusive occasion of renown and esteem, the wandering fortune, which leads himself and Josie on expeditions more hypnotic, and darker, than anything in Andy Gump's campaign for the presidency or Uncle Bim's contests with Count Zander, because they proceed from deeper within the characters. The "what!" of the Bungles' quests, the missing justification, is like unto the spot on the horizon, the Real Right Thing, after which the characters of Henry James, or the exclaimers and self-protesters of J.R. William's cartoons, are forever striving.

Lost! One Guide

Yet the energy which George invests in his delusions sets him apart from most of his white-collar fellows in comic strips; certainly from genially self-indulgent, and ever-indulged, Major Hoople. For, unlike the yarning Major, and in a way different from that of the loud-talking, but often shrewd and watchful Andy Gump, George repeatedly attempts to shape life to his fantasies. He dots it with a steamrolling energy which, however it may rebound on him, is a touch more formidable than that shared by his numerous middle-class neighbors. I cannot recall a comic strip artist who has portrayed, as did Tuthill, the Walter Mittyish imagination as something potentially, if ever-so-faintly, menacing: a loaded gun likely to go "Bang!" at any moment at all.

For George Bungle is an agent of disorder; he is the walking embodiment of disorder; the magnet of poltergeists and boggerts. Nonstop, centerless quarrels mushroom wherever he appears, walking his stiff-jointed walk (Tuthill, in his scant commentary for the daily strips, would usually refer to George as "the Colonel," a title never otherwise dwelt upon, that I know of; but I have assumed his walk to be the product of a war wound).

His Sunday page adventures are little glories of inanity, the megalomaniac zip of a Preston Sturges hero turned back upon itself, a syllogism of absurdity. George strolls down to the lake one fine evening, to hear an elderly gentleman, swimming, cry out for someone to rescue his Ambrose. Gallant George is halfway peeled out of his coat, even as the distraught old man announces a fifty dollar reward for Ambrose's recovery. After a series of futile plunges and splutterings, Ambrose reappears in his delighted guardian's grasp, and turns out to be a fish ("Ambrose! Naughty, naughty. Look, he knows we're talking about him") and finally awards himself the fifty bucks. However, George's response, in the last panel, is to hurl the fish back into the lake. That is George.

He is an incorrigible sidewalk superintendent, and extempore officator, a forty-carat buttinsky. He interrupts a pet-shop owner—a man with a thick Slavic accent—who quarrels with his painter over a matter of what George understands as the "poppies" which are to adorn the store window. George, his creative electricity in full flash, preempts the painting job, and supplies a border of red, white, and blue poppies, only to be enlightened that the design required was of *puppies*: "Ducks! Bow-wow!" George, with that philosophic calm which is always on call after the storms he has expressed and engendered, strolls away.

He is creativity, he is romance gone totally off the axle, skidding into this irrational gut-

I NOTICE THE FOLKS NEXTDOOR HAVE MOST OF THE NEIGHBORS GATHERED IN THERE THIS AFTERNOON. WHAT LOW-BROWED SHOUTING AND LAUGHING.
WHAT A COLLECTION. IF YOU ASKED THEM WHY THEY WERE LAUGHING SO HEARTILY THEY'D PROBABLY THINK YOU WERE TRYING TO CATCH THEM ON A RIDDLE.
MY STARS, HE'S ARGUING WITH HIS WIFE. LOOK AT HIM WAVE HIS ARMS AND SHAKE HIS HEAD. AND THAT RIGHT BEFORE ALL THE COMPANY.
NOW HE'S LOOKING OVER HERE IN A VERY TOUGH WAY. AS THOUGH IT WAS AGAINST THE LAW TO LOOK OUT OUR OWN WINDOW. MY WORD!
THEY'RE LAUGHING AGAIN. I WISH I COULD HEAR WHAT—
HE'S DOING SOMETHING...I CAN'T SEE HIM...OH YES, HE'S STANDING ON TWO CHAIRS TRYING TO HANG A PICTURE. AND THAT'S A LAUGH FOR THEM. OH WELL—
OH HE'S NO DIFFERENT THAN USUAL. YOU JUST HAPPENED TO BE WATCHING HIM NOW AND, IS THAT HIM IN THE HALL ARGUING WITH SOMEONE?
YES SIR, NO MAIL FOR YOU TODAY.
WHAT, NO MAIL! ARE YOU SURE? POSITIVE? LOOK THROUGH YOUR BAG AGAIN. THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! I KNOW THE POSTMASTER'S BROTHER-IN-LAW. I'LL SEE ABOUT THIS MY MAN!
IMAGINE TALKING TO THE POOR MAILMAN THAT WAY.
AND WHILE HIS PARTY WAS STANDING IN HIS DOOR WATCHING HIM. BLUFFING THE MAILMAN IS HIS WAY OF SHOWING THAT HE ISN'T AFRAID OF ANYBODY. EVEN THE GOVERNMENT.
YES....HE'S SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT MISSING A HALF PINT OF OIL OUT OF HIS GARAGE. THAT BABY IS SURE GOING CUCKOO AND IT'S A ONE WAY TRIP FOR HIM, TOO.
NOW HE'S UPSTAIRS ARGUING WITH THOSE PEACEABLE PEOPLE ABOUT SLAMMING THEIR HALL DOOR. I CAN'T IMAGINE—
WHAT A MAN! HE'S GOT ME LAUGHING AT HIM TOO. HE'S GOOD! GREAT! A RIOT!
THERE THOSE BABIES ARE LAUGHING THEIR HEADS OFF AGAIN. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH HE'S TELLING THEM GAGS AND THEN AGAIN.... LET ME THINK...?
HAW! HAW! HAW! GREAT!
VERY CLEVER! VERY GOOD!
WHADDYE MEAN, WHADDYE MEAN? WHEN I WAS OUT OF THIS HOUSE JUST NOW WHICH ONE OF YOU BABIES SNEEZED? COME, COME, BOYS DON'T DENY IT OR I'LL...
THERE'S THE DOORBELL, HORACE.
OH, OH! BOYS IT'S BUNGLE HIMSELF!
I GUESS I'LL GO UPSTAIRS WITH YOU ELMER.
NOW WHAT ABOUT IT...TELL THE TRUTH!
LISTEN BUNGLE. I'LL ADMIT YOUR GUESS IS RIGHT. BUT IT WAS ALL IN FUN. JUST A LITTLE SPORT AND AMUSEMENT FOR THE BOYS. CAN'T YOU TAKE A JOKE..?
H-MM! WELL BOYS I TOLD THE WIFE I'D BE GONE ONLY A SHORT TIME SO LONG.
MY STARS WHAT A RIOT THERE WAS IN THAT HALL. WHAT DID THAT MAN NEXTDOOR DO TO— ?
OH, HE WAS MERELY AMUSING HIS PALS WITH A FEW IMITATIONS OF ME. AND HE'S IN LYING ON HIS LOUNGE NOW SHOWING THEM HOW I LOOKED WHEN I HAD TROUBLE WITH THOSE TWO PIANO MOVERS WHO WERE SO TOUGH.

All pages from the collection of Rick Marschall

ter and that. And yet, as ruthlessly explicit as Harry Tuthill may be about George's eccentricities, he concedes him his eccentric will ...which is what sets him apart from the ranks of so many other ineffectual, pathetically dreaming work-a-dayers of the comic strips. George's daemonic strain, his not-to-be-dismissed crazy force, represents an autonomy as considerable as that of Moliere's or Meredith's comic protagonists. He displays a Quixotic combativeness: An afternoon walk may launch him into the weirdest skirmisnes, little cyclones of tussle in which fists seem to be impaled on spike noses, like jelly apples, and war-cries ("All right, you phony—") fly hot and heavy. They may involve an uncivil bill-poster, who accosts George with brushes and placards; or a contortionist who rebounds, an animate punching-bag, from his every blow; or, eerie as a vignette from Gogol, the embattled inhabitants of a sewer, whom we never see, but who seem to have resolved on their working-place as their fortress. All these fracases take place in whirligig confusion such as would send Quixote himself in despair back to his windmills. And the *most* eerie effect is that George generates and thrives on the turmoil.

But for all his quota of losses, Tuthill makes one believe that George can be a formidable

HEAVENLY DAYS, GEORGE BUNGLE, I JUST SAW THOSE NOSY WANGLES WADDLING UP THE WALK AND I KNOW THEY'RE COMING HERE. AND THE WAY THIS HOUSE LOOKS WHILE I'M HOUSECLEANING.
WHAT! WELL WE'RE JUST NOT HOME. TURN OUT THE LIGHTS.
IMAGINE PEOPLE RINGING A DOORBELL AND HAMMERING ON A DOOR STEADILY FOR AT LEAST TEN MINUTES.
P-SS-T! THEY'RE TIRING....OR THE BATTERY IS RUNNING DOWN.
I KNOW THEY'RE HOME, GUSTAVE BECAUSE I SAW A LIGHT AS WE STROLLED UP THE WALK.
I SEE SOMETHING MOVING.... MOVING. YOU KICK ON THE DOOR, HARDER. WHILE I RING AGAIN.
IMAGINE! SUCH A RACKET. AS THOUGH THEY WERE TRYING TO TEAR DOWN THE HOUSE.
WELL OUR MIND IS MADE UP THAT WE CAN STAND THIS JUST AS LONG AS THEY CAN.
AH, AT LAST THEY'VE STOPPED AND—
SH-HH! WHAT'S THAT? THEY'RE TRYING THE DOOR.
SH-HH! DID YOU LOCK THAT DOOR? I HEAR IT OPENING. OH, THEY'LL KNOW WE HEARD THEM.
LISTEN....QUICK. WE WERE SOUND ASLEEP ALL THE TIME. WE WON'T WAKE UP EVEN IF THEY HAVE THE CRUST TO WALK IN HERE.
AHEM! GEORGE!
GEORGE! OH GEORGE! H-MM! ASLEEP WITH HIS MOUTH WIDE OPEN. LOOK AT HIM!
AND POOR JOSEPHINE TOO LOOKS SO....POOR THING...WHEN A PERSON'S FACE IS RELAXED IT MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR APPEARANCE.
WELL PET, LET'S NOT DISTURB THEM. LET'S TAKE ANOTHER GOOD LOOK AT GEORGE AND BE ON OUR WAY
POOR JOSEPHINE. WHAT A DIFFERENCE IT MAKES IN A PERSON'S AGE WHEN THEY'RE NOT ALL FIXED UP.
BY JOVE, HERE'S THAT UMBRELLA GEORGE GOT FROM ME MONTHS AGO. WELL, THEY'RE BOTH SOUND ASLEEP AND IT MIGHT POSSIBLY RAIN WHILE WE'RE ON OUR WAY HOME.
HOW STUFFY THIS PLACE IS. OH HOW I WISH I TOO WERE THE SORT WHO COULD JUST LET EVERYTHING TAKE CARE OF ITSELF WHILE I DROPPED DOWN ANYWHERE AND FELL ASLEEP.
THERE THEY GO! OH WHAT A SITUATION. THE REMARKS SHE MADE. SHE KNEW WE WEREN'T ASLEEP.
HE KNEW I WAS AWAKE TOO.... THE IDEA OF HIM TALKING ABOUT HOW MY MOUTH LOOKED. WHICH ONE OF US SUGGESTED THAT IDEA OF PLAYING POSSUM? HOW DID YOU COME TO THINK OF THAT IDEA?
HELLO MR. LANDLORD... THIS IS YOUR TENANT AGAIN...OVER THE BUNGLES...THEY'RE KEEPING EVERYBODY IN THIS HOUSE AWAKE ARGUING ABOUT WHY THEY WENT TO SLEEP!
EXPLAIN TO HIM MONMOUTH, THAT WE'RE SORT OF ACCUSTOMED TO THEIR SILLY ARGUMENTS BUT THIS ONE IS JUST THE WORST EVER.

opponent: his neighbors and relatives are leery of him. A rebellious clique of Bungle relatives, formed to challenge George and Josie's title to an inheritance promised by a genealogist, scatters when George stalks into their store-front headquarters. He brings us up short: How extraordinary to realize the untilled acreage that exists in popular art between the abject victims of "off-days," hard luck, defective equipment, or their own amiable incompetence, and the Flash Gordons! In George, I suspect—it is the most plausible explanation I can put forth for the continued, rather wide, popularity over three decades of this aloof, irony-juiced strip—American readers felt an independent mind and imagination, however loony their occasional excursions, tendering confidences, genial enough, but never wheedling.

As Tuthill's style, which originally lurches and skitters like the roughest table-cloth jottings, finds solidity, it becomes a startlingly supple instrument of suggestion, a vehicle of the fantasy's elusiveness. Even when melodrama, Tuthill-style, takes the keyboard, the soft-pedal is played. A daughter, Peggy, drifts through during the '30s; in her rather languid wake a suitor, one of the most dubious of "good guys," named Hartford Oakdale. A mustachioed smoothie of wrinkle-free man-

WINDROW KNOWS SO MANY TRICKS. HE PUZZLES EVERYBODY.
ANOTHER IS MY EGG TRICK. ORIGINATED BY ME PERSONALLY. HAVE YOU GOT AN EGG? ANY EGG.
AN EGG?
AN EGG! HERE IT IS!
FINE! IT'S A BIT LARGE BUT THAT OUGHT TO MAKE THE TRICK MORE CONFUSING.
NOW WATCH ME CLOSELY. I HOLD THE EGG THUS ..THEN PASS IT BACK AND FORTH THROUGH MY HANDS AND PRESTO, IT'S ..
GONE! VERY GOOD, WINDY
YES AND...WHY WINDROW WHAT'S WRONG? HE LOOKS SO... WINDROW! SPEAK!
GOZZLE! ABOO GAROOF GAROO!
WHAT'S WRONG? MY WORD! HAVE YOU GOT THE EGG IN YOUR MOUTH?
HE ALWAYS BREAKS THE EGG WITH HIS TEETH AND...
HE CAN'T BREAK THAT ONE. IT'S A CHINA EGG I GAVE HIM HERE, LET ME BELT YOU ON THE BACK. COUGH IT OUT, WINDY. NOW, ONCE MORE....BOTH TOGETHER!
THAT DOESN'T WORK .I'LL HAVE TO TAKE OFF MY COAT
GARBOO! DZLUSH MNISH ZAFIE!
LET ME TRY TO GET HOLD OF IT. .DON'T FIGHT ME, WINDY. NO GOOD...IT WON'T COME OUT OF HIS MOUTH I'LL HAVE TO GET SOMETHING AND BUST THE EGG
STEADY WINDY! OPEN YOUR MOUTH SO I CAN GET THIS SCREWDRIVER IN AND HIT IT A COUPLE OF TIMES WITH THE HAMMER. .STEADY..ONCE MORE! MISSED IT AGAIN! STEADY...AH! THAT WAS A GOOD SOLID JOLT. I FELT SOMETHING GIVE.
A FEEF! FEEF! OH, OH, OH! A FOOF OOSE!
WHAT'S THAT AGAIN? FEEF? OH! I LOOSENED YOUR TEETH? WELL, ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN WINDY.
OH OH OH! AND LOOK AT HIS FACE FROM PRYING IN IT WITH THAT BENT SCREWDRIVER! OH!
GEORGE BE CAREFUL!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
LET ME THINK. ? LISTEN, WINDY THIS IS NO TIME TO BE CHICKEN-HEARTED I'LL SIMPLY HAVE TO JUST PULL THAT EGG OUT OF YOUR FACE.
OOGH! FOOF! GAVOOH!
YES I KNOW. STEADY... DON'T RIGHT ME, WINDY. LET ME GET HOLD OF THE EGG AND...
GA-VORF OO-USH HOOUF!
STEADY...I GOT IT... BUT NOW I CAN'T GET MY HAND OUT OF HIS MOUTH... HEY! HEY, DON'T GNAW ON MY HAND WINDY OR... HEY!
LET GO! HEY! CHEWING ON MY HAND! LET GO!
OH THERE'S THE EGG! OUT AT LAST, WINDROW!
WHOOIE! MY HAND!
OH WINDROW! LOOK AT HIS FACE! HOW IT'S ALL STRETCHED OUT OF SHAPE LIKE...OH, LIKE AN OLD ACCORDION! OH! OH!
BUT HONEY, YOU KNOW VERY WELL GEORGE DIDN'T PURPOSELY STRETCH WINDROW'S FACE LIKE THAT
OH! OH! OH! HIS FACE! I KNOW IT WILL NEVER GO BACK LIKE IT WAS! NEVER! OH! OH! OH!
LISTEN GEORGE, I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU FOR GETTING THAT EGG OUT OF MY FACE AND I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU FOR HOW YOU DID IT.
SUCH PEOPLE! THE WAY SHE RAVED ABOUT HOW HIS FACE LOOKED WHEN THEY LEFT.
OH WELL, WHY WORRY? OUR CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR. WE KNOW ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO A FACE LIKE HIS WOULD BE AN IMPROVEMENT.

ners, instantly championed by George (who may have seen a self-projection), Mr. Oakdale sprays the Bungles' lives with the heady cologne of intrigue: stolen jewels and kidnappings. Yet, Tuthill, with his zest for deflecting cliches, swipes aside every opportunity for the *schmaltz* in which Sidney Smith, from an overflowing tureen, bathed his characters. A kidnap attempt by gangsters is—indeed, as one can imagine the probable real-life equivalent—a series of "close-ups": George, Josie and Peggy, unfevered but bemused, exchanging speculations about why they are not headed for their host's yacht as promised. When Lord Addlewit regales George with some Trader Hornpipe about a facedown with jungle natives, all that the "flashback" panels reveal are some static clusters of Addlewit's party and some staid-looking, mostly naked black men. All of which reflects, not Tuthill's disinterest in or self-consciousness about melodrama, but his determination to play it his own way, using his wry-minded sense of scale. His drawing, once a maneuvering action through his limitations, has become an agent, positive instrument of selection, such as how many comic strips offer us? It is romance permanently off-center; even Peggy's ambiguous courtship by Mr. Oakdale fails to turn up the James Stewart/Jimmy

WHAT! YOU, EDDIE?
AND BERTHA! OH DARLING IT'S SUCH A LONG TIME SINCE WE SAW YOU.
WE WERE PASSING AND DECIDED TO DROP IN.
IT STARTED TO RAIN JUST AS WE GOT A FEW DOORS FROM HERE AND.
OH KA CHOO!
OH EDGAR, THERE GOES YOUR SINUSES AGAIN! YOU JUST MUST GET THOSE DAMP CLOTHES OFF RIGHT AWAY IF GEORGE CAN LEND YOU A SUIT.
A SUIT OF CLOTHES?
A SUIT? YOU MEAN WHILE EDDIE'S SUIT IS DRYING?
THE IDEA OF YOU SPEAKING UP THAT WAY ABOUT LETTING HIM HAVE A SUIT, AFTER ALL THAT WOMAN HAS SAID ABOUT ME TO EVEN MY BEST FRIENDS. YOU KNEW TOO THAT SHE'S THE ONE WHO GOT ME OUT OF THE FRIDAY CLUB.
LISTEN JO, YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK OF HIM. I DIDN'T OFFER HIM A SUIT. HE ASKED ME POINT BLANK FOR IT.
GEORGE IS GETTING SOME CLOTHES FOR EDGAR. HOW ARE YOU, DEAR? YOU LOOK JUST WONDERFUL. HOW'S THINGS AT THE FRIDAY CLUB?
OH ALL RIGHT DARLING, BUT SOMEHOW OR OTHER THINGS JUST HAVEN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE YOU LEFT. I NEVER DID UNDERSTAND WHY YOU...OH HERE COMES THE BOYS.
EDGAR! OH YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU WERE SMOTHERING IN THAT SUIT.
GEORGE WHY DIDN'T YOU GIVE EDGAR A MORE COMFORTABLE SUIT? THAT'S YOUR NEW SUIT.
IT'LL DO WHILE THE OTHER ONE DRIES.
EDDIE YOU LOOK SO...OH HA HA HA
HA HA HA! OH EDDIE YOU LOOK...
EDGAR, YOUR SINUSES AGAIN!
OH KA CHOO!
KA CHOO! KA CHOO
EDDIE! HEY! WAIT! EVERY TIME YOU SNEEZE I HEAR THAT SUIT GIVING. WAIT, DON'T SNEEZE ANY MORE, PLEASE, WHILE I SEE IF YOUR SUIT IS DRY.
A.AH KA...
HEY EDDIE! WAIT! HOLD IT! YOUR SUIT IS DRY! DRIER THAN IT WAS! THIS WAY, EDDIE!
AS I SAY, DARLING, I NEVER REGRETTED LEAVING THE FRIDAY CLUB BECAUSE, AS YOU OF COURSE KNOW, CERTAIN MEMBERS WERE SIMPLY DELIGHTED WHEN I RESIGNED.
REALLY? WELL HONEY I JUST CAN'T IMAGINE WHO COULD POSSIBLY HAVE WANTED YOU TO LEAVE! LET ME TRY AND GUESS DEAR, AND....OH HERE'S EDGAR AND GEORGE!
WHOO! GETTING MY SUIT DAMP MADE IT SHRINK UP SOMETHING TERRIBLE AND.
AH KA—
LISTEN, DON'T SNEEZE EDDIE. HOLD IT.
WELL EDGAR, I GUESS WE'D BETTER GO NOW.
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. 9-10-33.
GONE! HA! HOW TWO-FACED SHE IS. ACTING AS THOUGH SHE THOUGHT I DIDN'T KNOW WHO WORKED ME OUT OF THAT CLUB.
ALSO, HE TORE MY BEST SUIT APART WITH ALL THAT TRICK SNEEZING AND OH OH LISTEN TO THAT!
AH KA CHOO!
HA! THERE'S THE DOORBELL. THEY THINK THEY'LL GET IN HERE AGAIN. LISTEN TO THEM RINGING THAT BELL. YOU SIT RIGHT HERE, GEORGE BUNGLE.
THAT LAST SNEEZE MUST HAVE SCATTERED HIS SUIT ALL OVER THE HALL. THERE GOES THE DOORBELL AGAIN. WELL IT WOULDN'T DO HIM ANY GOOD IF I DID OPEN THE DOOR BECAUSE THE ONLY THING I'D LEND HIM, IF I HAD IT, IS AN ELASTIC BLANKET.

Cagney Mr. Right whom, even in full knowledge of Harry Tuthill's works, we may fleetingly expect. The only rival to appear, however, is one Barko Sowers, a snakier version of Oaksdale, against whom Hartford glows, however dully. Not Mr. Right, but Mr. Best-We-Can-Hope-For.

The Bungles' advance into the '30s—that era which saw, in films, the rebirth and life-eternal fantasies of *Topper* and *On Borrowed Time*, and *The Scoundrel*, the power-through-grace fable of H.G. Wells's "*The Man Who Could Work Miracles*"—found George's restive fantasy life beginning to colonize the "real world." Not only do his daily confrontations grow increasingly eccentric (see above), but his dream-life more and more infiltrates the Sunday pages. He counts sheep which, typically enough, begin wrangling among themselves as to who will precede whom. A Busby Berkeley-type extravaganza on the idea of "bringing home the bacon" finds him a pork tycoon, making a luncheon appointment with President Roosevelt, until awakened by Josie, who needs two dollars for the landlord.

During the waking life of the daily strips, George's dreams begin to spawn curious visitors to Sunken Heights. He is whisked into an undercover assignment guarding a top-secret rocket—which, to be sure, promptly goes

WHY IF IT ISN'T NATINKA AND MOSCOW!
WELL WELL, OLD MOSSY! HOW'S THE...? WHY MOSSY, YOU LOOK SO...
MOSCOW, YOUR TOUPEE...IT STUCK IN YOUR HAT AGAIN.
WHY MOSCOW, I NEVER KNEW YOU WORE A...
NEITHER DID I. LET ME HAVE YOUR HAT WHILE YOU ADJUST.
MOSCOW BOUGHT THIS ONE BY MAIL. IT'S AWAY TOO LOOSE.
IT GOT WET AND SHRUNK, WHEN I DRIED IT OUT IT GOT LOOSE AS ASHES AND
HEY! HOLD IT! THE TOUPEE! IT BLEW OFF IN THIS DRAFT! GRAB IT!
I'LL GET IT, MOSSY!
I WARNED YOU, MOSCOW, BEFORE WE LEFT HOME, TO PUT SOME OF THAT STUFF ON IT THAT MAKES IT STAY ON YOUR HEAD.
GEORGE, HAVE YOU GOT SOME MUCILAGE? SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
MUCILAGE? COME WITH ME MOSSY, AND I'LL HAVE A LOOK.
NOT TOO MUCH OF THAT GOO, WHATEVER IT IS, GEORGE. JUST AROUND THE EDGES. HEY, YOU'VE GOT IT FULL! IT'S RUNNING OVER!
DON'T GET EXCITED. YOU WANT THIS THING TO REALLY STAY ON YOUR DOME, DON'T YOU? THERE, WRING IT OUT AND PUT IT ON.
THAT'S GREAT! SO SNUG! OH WHAT A BIG RELIEF! HOW DOES IT LOOK FROM THE REAR?
GREAT. POSITIVELY GREAT! PERFECT! AND YOU CAN TAKE MY WORD THAT IT WON'T BLOW OFF AGAIN IN A HURRY.
YES GIRLS, EVERYTHING'S HOTSY TOTSY NOW.
YES, ALL OK
WHY MOSCOW, YOU LOOK SO.
MOSCOW YOU HAVE THAT TOUPEE ON WRONG SIDE FOREMOST.
OH YOU LOOK SO...SO UTTERLY SIMPLE.
YES, YOU'LL HAVE TO TURN IT AROUND, MOSCOW.
AHEM! WE'LL HAVE TO FIX THAT, MOSSY. COME WITH ME AGAIN.
MY WORD MOSSY, IT WON'T COME LOOSE! HOLD STEADY. I'LL TRY AND JERK IT LOOSE NOW. ONE.. TWO.. IT'S COMING. I FELT SOMETHING GIVE ON THAT JERK.
THAT WAS MY SCALP TEARING LOOSE. HEY! HEY! THAT'S ENOUGH! TOO MUCH! LET GO AND NOW!
SUCH LUCK! WELL IT JUST HAS TO COME OFF. HOLD STEADY WHILE I TRY AND PRY IT LOOSE. STEADY. THAT'S NO GOOD EITHER. MY WORD, HOW QUICKLY THAT TIRE CEMENT SETS!
TIRE CEMENT? IS THAT WHAT YOU PUT ON MY TOUPEE? TIRE CEMENT! LISTEN BUNGLE, LET GO OF ME RIGHT NOW!
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. 9-24-33
MOSCOW! WHAT HAPPENED? YOU WERE OUT IN THE OTHER ROOM SO LONG AND YOUR HAIR IS JUST AS IT WAS BEFORE
AHEM! WELL WE HAD A LITTLE BAD LUCK WITH.
TIRE CEMENT! ON MY HEAD! BABE, PUT ON YOUR HAT. LET'S GO FROM HERE RIGHT NOW!
LISTEN MOSSY, GIVE ME A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN...
NO! NO! THE IDEA OF ANYBODY TREATING MY GOOD $18 TOUPEE AS THOUGH IT WAS AN AUTO TIRE PATCH. GEORGE BUNGLE, I'M DONE WITH YOU! DONE!
OH MOSCOW, HOW WILL WE EVER GET HOME WITH YOUR HAIR LIKE THAT? HOW?

AWOL, with George as its sole passenger, and deposits him in the woman-dominated future civilization of Queen Chloe XXIV who instantly appropriates George as her prospective king. (This episode actually represents one of George's, and Tuthill's, least successful fantasies. Perhaps because of the unaccustomed scope, Tuthill's tilting cliche is, itself, a cliche of S-F burlesques.) The eeriest, funniest, and most mordant of George's excursions, however, confront him with dinky, scruffy-looking but redoubtable men, who, like George McWhirter Fotheringay, the Man Who Could Work Miracles, possess reality-shuffling powers—which one and all they place at George's disposal. These *schlepper* elves would seem natural ancestors to another disadvantaged Oberon, Jackeen J. O'Malley, Barnaby's fairy godfather. But they are much more efficient, generally much meaner, and treat George with a condescending but wholehearted cordiality. There is a genii-like personage who inflicts "squitches," mini-curses, on George's enemies, causing a nasty-talking neighbor, for example, to swallow his teeth. The spirit of Dumb Luck amiably introduces himself as George's natural guardian.

The visualization of these seedy gnomes is

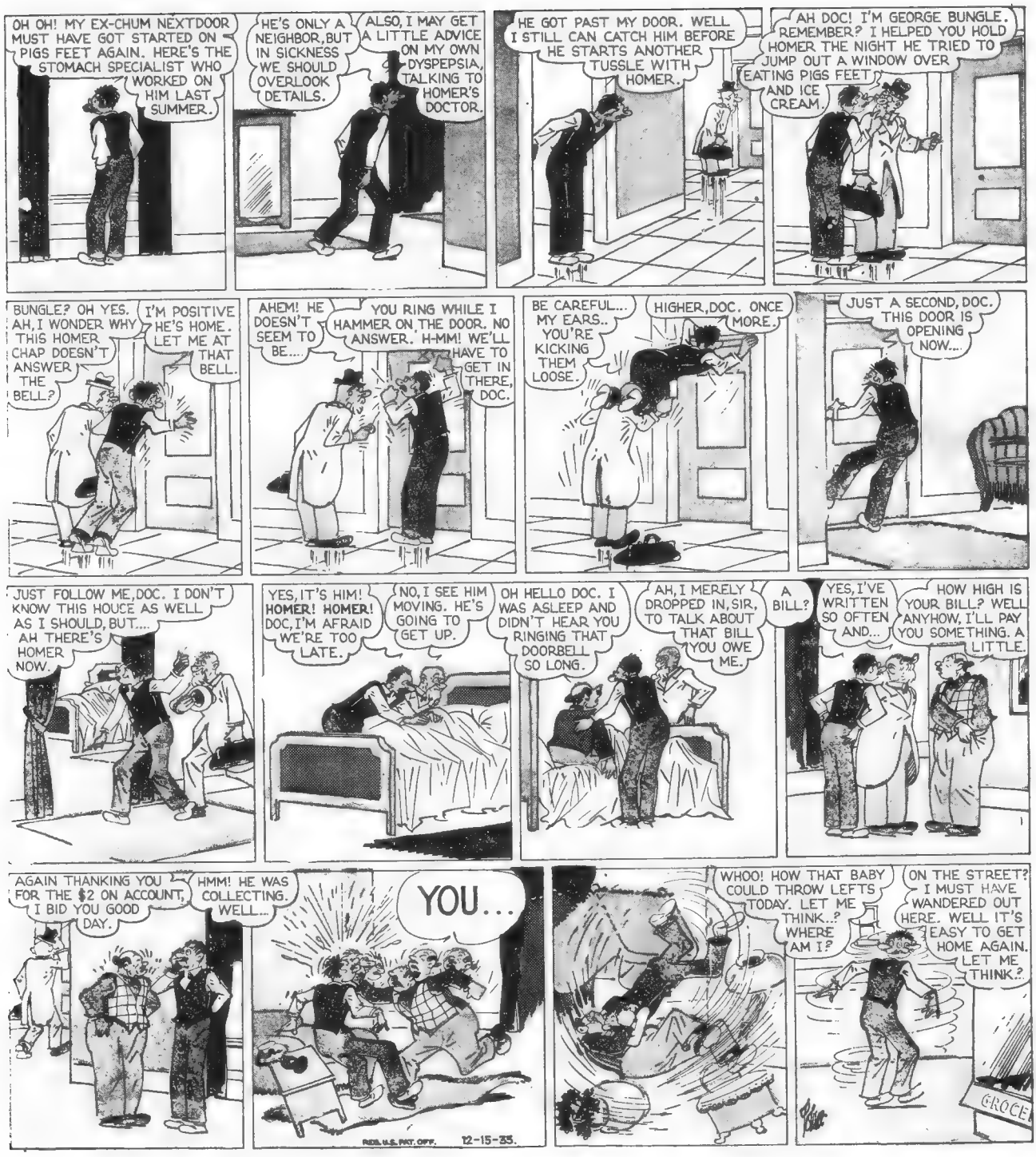
OH DOGGIE. WHY TALK ABOUT LEAVING SO EARLY?
WE MUST GO. NAOM. DARLING HAS A TERRIFIC DAY AHEAD OF HER TOMORROW. COOKING, SWEEPING, SEWING, SO FORTH.
OH BRUNO SWEET, YOUR WORK IS AS IMPORTANT AS MINE, DEAR.
NOW NOW, HONEY-BUNCH, YOU KNOW DEAR THAT YOU....
WE MUST GO. EVERY MOMENT OF SLEEP IS IMPORTANT TO YOU BRUNO, PET, AT THIS SEASON OF THE YEAR.
WELL DOGGIE AND NAOM!, WE'RE SURE SORRY TO SEE YOU LEAVE.
HEAVENLY DAYS! SUCH MUSH! THE WAY THOSE PEOPLE GUSHED OVER EACH OTHER.
WELL I'LL ADMIT THEY DON'T TRY TO CONCEAL THEIR SENTIMENT FOR EACH OTHER.
SENTIMENT? IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL THE WAY THAT WOMAN LISPED BABY TALK TO HIM?
LISTEN JO, I'M TALKING ABOUT KIND WORDS, TENDERNESS, AND SO FORTH.
YOU MEAN YOU ADMIRED THE WAY SHE SIMPERED PET NAMES?
MY IDEA, JO, IS SIMPLY THAT A SMILE GOES FARTHER THAN A DIRTY LOOK.
IN OTHER WORDS I'M TALKING ABOUT TENDER-NESS. REAL TENDERNESS.
AND YOU'D LIKE ME TO BE LIKE SHE WAS?
ALL RIGHT DARLING, NOTHING IS EASIER. AND JUST FOR THAT I'M GOING TO MUSS UP HIM'S NICE HAIR.
HEY! HEY! LET'S BE SERIOUS.
OH OO BIG THILLY OLD DOLLING. NOW I'LL GIVE HIMS A BIG HUG.
HEY! HEY! STOP! HEY!
KINDLY CUT IT OUT. I THINK YOU BUSTED THESE CIGARS I HAVE IN MY POCKET.
OH SWEET-HEART, THE WAY YOU PUSHED ME AWAY FROM YOU!
THEY'RE BUSTED! LOOK AT THEM. FINE STUFF! GOOD CIGARS, TOO.
IMAGINE! A MOMENT AGO YOU TALKED ABOUT TENDERNESS. NOW YOU HOWL ABOUT TWO CHEAP CIGARS.
CHEAP? THESE ARE DIME CIGARS.
OH I DON'T CARE. IT'S ALWAYS THIS WAY. OH YOU'RE SO SELFISH. BOO HOO!
THERE THERE DON'T CRY JO I CAN GET MORE CIGARS.
COME COME DEAR, KINDLY DO NOT CRY SO HARD. I'LL ADMIT I SPOKE SHARPLY BUT.
OH OH OH! YOU RE SO UTTERLY TERRIBLE! OH BOO HOO HOO HOO.. HA HA HA!
HA HA?
TEE HEE! THE WAY YOU SPOKE TO ME JUST NOW.... AND HOW YOU KEEP LOOKING AT THOSE CIGARS! OH HA HA HA!
HA HA! YOU LOOKED SO SERIOUS.. AND THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME NOW. SO FUNNY! OH HA HA HA!
TELL ME! FIRST YOU DEMAND "TENDERNESS," THEN YOU ARGUE FOR AN HOUR OVER BUSTING TWO CIGARS YOU GOT FOR NOTHING AT THE LAST ELECTION. "TENDER-NESS!" HA!
SUCH LUCK! I WONDER IF WRAPPING ONION-SKIN PAPER AROUND THEM WILL HELP? I WONDER IF WE HAVE ANY ONION-SKIN PAPER?
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. 3-18-34

informed with Tuthill's usual sarcastic economy. They are not here to convert the Bungles' skeletal, shabby-genteel, claustrophobic world, but come as its natural children; and they have the spooky plausibility—to which the popular reading of our current, psychic energy-obsessed age will attest—of poltergeists. Then, in the mid-'30s, as though the Caliban energumen of George's wilfulness had embarked, finally, on a life of its own—or as though Harry Tuthill, jaded at last with the Bungles' spider-webbed life, were trying to thrash on to something else—George acquires a protege called Doodle: neither poltergeist nor elf but an earthy, cheerful recasting of their short-spoken, daemonic efficiency. Doodle is built along their inverted-kettle lines, human-size, with a moustache seemingly fashioned from discarded turnip-greens. He talks that pan-Slavic which is Tuthill's only venture, within my knowledge, into ethnic characterization. He endears himself to George on joining a decrepit baseball club which George has acquired, and straightaway recharges the club's (and George's) morale with his dippy, Z-curved pitch. The unlikely partnership progresses through Doodle's short career as a wrestler, and the pair's more erratic enterprises as private detectives.

Doodle was the first full-scale portrait of

HEAR THE LITTLE WOMAN BARKING HERE. TO GET THE PAPER AWAY FROM ME. I SUPPOSE WELL THAT'S JUST TOO BAD.
OH HERE YOU ARE. HAVE YOU GOT THE ADVERTISING PART OF THE PAPER?
I JUST WANT TO GLANCE OVER IT FOR A MOMENT OR SO TO
I'LL BE THROUGH WITH IT IN A MINUTE.
THAT OLD STUFF. GLANCING THROUGH IT. THAT MEANS FROM NOW ON.
KINDLY SIT DOWN, JO, AND I'LL RUSH THROUGH THIS ARTICLE I'M READING.
I CAN SEE SHE DOESN'T LIKE THAT. WELL. IT'S JUST AS TOUGH FOR ME WHEN YOU GET THE PAPER FIRST, SISTER BUNGLE.
KINDLY SIT DOWN. HOW INSIPID HE LOOKS SITTING THERE WITH THAT SUPERIOR AIR. HA! WELL
SHE'S GETTING READY TO GRAB IT AWAY FROM ME. WELL SISTER, TRY IT. THAT'S ALL. TRY IT.
GEORGE DEAR, WHY DO YOU MOVE YOUR MOUTH LIKE A RABBIT EATING WHILE YOU READ? I HEARD OF A DOCTOR WHO CLAIMED THAT WAS A SIGN OF WEL SOMETHING WRONG
OH IT'S JUST A HABIT I HAVE. THAT'S ALL.
HERE'S WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO GET MAD AND WALK AWAY LEAVING HER THE PAPER. OH YEAH!
DO YOU MIND IF I READ WITH YOU, GEORGE?
VISITING DIPLOMAT HERE ON GOOD WILL TOUR REFUSES TO DISCUSS WAR DEBTS.
THIS READING OUT LOUD IS SUPPOSED TO JUST BURN ME UP. HO HUM!
MY COUNTRY, HE SAID, SENDS TO YOUR PEOPLE OUR GREAT LOVE.
?
AHEM!
DISCUSSES ARMS RACE.. LARGE ARMY AND NAVY TO BE USED ONLY AS GUARD FOR PEACE.
HOW INTERESTING.
GEORGE DEAR, PLEASE DON'T PULL THE PAPER AWAY FROM ME THAT WAY.
WHY GEORGE BUNGLE, SHAME ON YOU. THE IDEA OF TRYING TO JERK THIS PAPER OUT OF MY HAND.
TUT TUT! BE CAREFUL. YOU'LL TEAR IT.
OH GEORGE, YOU SILLY OLD THING. LET GO OF THAT PAPER!
NOW NOW JO, YOU LET GO FIRST. PLEASE, OR GEORGIE WILL.....
OH MY GOODNESS! TORN! OH, OH, OH! I WAS AFRAID OF THAT!
YES, SURE ENOUGH. TORN.
TEE HEE! NOW JUST FOR THAT I'M GOING TO GRAB THAT OTHER PIECE OUT OF YOUR HAND.
HA HA, AND I'LL OH OH! EASY JO YOU'VE GOT HOLD OF MY HAIR INSTEAD OF THE PAPER!
OUCH!
OH EXCUSE ME. I WAS... OH YOU PUNCHED ME WITH YOUR ELBOW DEAR.
BEG YOUR PARDON. I OH OH! YOU'VE GOT MY HAIR AGAIN.
OW!
OH DEAR ME, THAT WAS YOUR HAIR. I'M SO SORRY AND
CAREFUL! WE'RE FALLING! YOU'LL HURT YOURSELF. HEY! HEY! AGAIN YOU'VE GOT MY HAIR.
HEY!
REG U.S. PAT. OFF. 9-2-34
HA HA! SUCH FUN! SUCH A SILLY BUSINESS. WELL ANYHOW GEORGE DEAR, WE DIDN'T, AS USUAL, GET MAD.
HA HA! IT WAS ALL SO FUNNY HA HA! AND, AS YOU SAY, WE BOTH HELD OUR TEMPER.
THAT WRETCH! TEARING UP THAT PAPER AND THEN USING JUST ODDLES OF FAKE POLITENESS
SUCH CRUST AND ... ME, INTO A FIT WHERE I'D HAVE TO JUST LAUGH WHILE SHE WAS TEARING MY HAIR OUT AND
PIECES.

innocence that I am aware of Tuthill having attempted, a brother-in-arms of those formidably endowed but sentimentally vulnerable men (or monsters): Popeye's Toar, Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*, Karloff's Thing in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, which, in the Depression '30s, emblematized innocence and affection, linked —shackled—to a strength, a potency, which was abused and evilly manipulated. I think that Tuthill's oblique, sardonic talent, with its proclivity for skating the thinnest of ice, was at once fascinated and a little embarrassed, after the first farcical elan of the ball-club episodes, by Doodle's presence, his meaning to George, and his possible permutations. He had one more try at the character, however. The Sunday *New York American* pages of 1937 are rather abruptly taken over by George's hulking cousin, Homer. He is a man unlike George or even Doodle, of minimal speech, and, *quite* unlike George, of rather consistent if short-range success at expressing his will. The profuse dialogue balloons of the Sunday pages are banished by the rousing pantomime of Homer who, in one episode, observes his beloved Miss Dilly Doe being squired by an Oakdale-Sowers type. Homer sulkily consents when she sweetly requests his umbrella; then, as he is getting it from his bedroom, he yields up an explosive "NO!" in agonized close-up.


OH OH! MY EX-CHUM NEXTDOOR MUST HAVE GOT STARTED ON PIGS FEET AGAIN. HERE'S THE STOMACH SPECIALIST WHO WORKED ON HIM LAST SUMMER.
HE'S ONLY A NEIGHBOR, BUT IN SICKNESS WE SHOULD OVERLOOK DETAILS.
ALSO, I MAY GET A LITTLE ADVICE ON MY OWN DYSPEPSIA, TALKING TO HOMER'S DOCTOR.
HE GOT PAST MY DOOR. WELL I STILL CAN CATCH HIM BEFORE HE STARTS ANOTHER TUSSLE WITH HOMER.
AH DOC! I'M GEORGE BUNGLE. REMEMBER? I HELPED YOU HOLD HOMER THE NIGHT HE TRIED TO JUMP OUT A WINDOW OVER EATING PIGS FEET AND ICE CREAM.
BUNGLE? OH YES. AH, I WONDER WHY THIS HOMER CHAP DOESN'T ANSWER THE BELL?
I'M POSITIVE HE'S HOME. LET ME AT THAT BELL.
AHEM! HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE...
YOU RING WHILE I HAMMER ON THE DOOR. NO ANSWER. H-MM! WE'LL HAVE TO GET IN THERE, DOC.
BE CAREFUL... MY EARS.. YOU'RE KICKING THEM LOOSE.
HIGHER, DOC. ONCE MORE.
JUST A SECOND, DOC. THIS DOOR IS OPENING NOW...
JUST FOLLOW ME, DOC. I DON'T KNOW THIS HOUCE AS WELL AS I SHOULD, BUT.... AH THERE'S HOMER NOW.
YES, IT'S HIM! HOMER! HOMER! DOC, I'M AFRAID WE'RE TOO LATE.
NO, I SEE HIM MOVING. HE'S GOING TO GET UP.
OH HELLO DOC. I WAS ASLEEP AND DIDN'T HEAR YOU RINGING THAT DOORBELL SO LONG.
AH, I MERELY DROPPED IN, SIR, TO TALK ABOUT THAT BILL YOU OWE ME.
A BILL?
YES, I'VE WRITTEN SO OFTEN AND...
HOW HIGH IS YOUR BILL? WELL ANYHOW, I'LL PAY YOU SOMETHING. A LITTLE.
AGAIN THANKING YOU FOR THE $2 ON ACCOUNT, I BID YOU GOOD DAY.
HMM! HE WAS COLLECTING. WELL...
YOU...
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. 12-15-35.
WHOO! HOW THAT BABY COULD THROW LEFTS TODAY. LET ME THINK..? WHERE AM I?
ON THE STREET? I MUST HAVE WANDERED OUT HERE. WELL IT'S EASY TO GET HOME AGAIN. LET ME THINK..?
GROCE

Homer then shows himself a descendant (albeit non-verbal) of King Solomon and a cousin *germane* of good old George by scissoring the umbrella in half, forcing the courtly slicker to prove his mettle by leaving Miss Doe the protective half, while he is forced to walk in the rain.

Homer represented the most decisive splitting of the Bungles' imaginative walls in the course of their existence. He did not last long; perhaps proving too violent a disruption of what had become—for Tuthill's readers of the past generation—accustomed if offbeat rhythms. I can understand, but regret, Homer's departure; he might have augured that reshaping and re-liberation of one's vocabulary that only the most earnestly committed and vigorous artists can consider... much less put into execution.

As it was—until Tuthill's final withdrawal, in the mid-1940s—he seems less soured and less lulled, as by protective self-inoculation, into the fatal mechanics of routine, than most other such artists who come to mind. And the Bungles' destiny has, in at least one instance, proven happier than their spiritual daughter's—for, in the wake of their cranky, off-sides existence, there have been no attempts to "revive" them through other hands.

n

The Allen Saunders Autobiography

Chapter Three—The Twenties

Mornings At The Blackboard, Afternoons And Evenings At The Drawing Board

Although the primary reason for spending summers in Chicago in the 1920s was to improve my knowledge of French, Spanish and Italian, I probably spent more hours trying to master perspective and foreshortening than in studying Romance Languages. I found time somehow to take night classes at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and worked briefly as a reporter on the now defunct Chicago *Journal*.

The cartooning teachers were encouraging and urged me to look for work in that field. The managing editor of the *Journal* offered me a permanent place on his staff. But the assurance of a reasonably good income kept me returning to Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Teaching at Wabash College was a pleasant experience. The buildings were old in the 1920s, and bathed in tradition. Typical "hallowed halls." The campus was, and is today, a forest of venerable oaks, maples, beeches and sycamores. The pace of life was leisurely. My fellow teachers were, with rare exceptions, friendly, highly intelligent and glad to help a neophyte.

The Center Hall classroom where I did most of my teaching had once been used by another classroom instructor in French, one whose name would, years later, be internationally lauded and nationally cursed.

There are few alive today who remember him, but Ezra Pound shook Crawfordsville like a tornado. Disapproving residents peered around drawn curtains as he paraded the streets with a cane, a bulldog on a leash, and invited criticism by swaggering into saloons. In the classroom, feet on desk, he opened each session by telling a student to start reading and translating on a given page. Pound then opened a book of Oriental poetry and, ignoring the student, contentedly immersed his mind in Chinese and Japanese classics until the bell signaled the end of the class period. "We'll go on from there tomorrow," he would announce, and wave the students out.

His tenure at Wabash was abruptly terminated by what he insisted was an act of compassion. A shabby little burlesque company had run out of funds after a performance at which Pound had been one of the few paying patrons. The following morning, by pure coincidence, the college president, an ordained minister, had matters to discuss with his controversial faculty member. He walked over to the instructor's room and knocked. A bleary-eyed Pound opened the door. Over his shoulder, the astounded president glimpsed a sleepy burlesque queen pulling bedclothes over her bare shoulders.

"Nothing wrong, Doctor," Pound insisted. "She had nowhere to sleep. . . and I took pity on her."

Ezra Pound boarded the Monon train that afternoon and rode away. . . to fame as one of America's great poets. . . to infamy as a reputed traitor.

My classes were popular, not because they were well-taught (I now realize) but because they were entertaining. . . a show for which no admission ticket was required.

For vocabulary drill I drew on the blackboard a cartoon illustrating each verb, noun, or adjective and challenged the student to give me the French word describing the sketch. Looking back, I get the feeling that I stole academic time to practice comic art.

For some undiscovered reason, Crawfordsville, Ind., was the spawning place for an unusual number of cartoonists: Dave Gerard (once mayor of the town), Bill Holman, Bandel Linn, Frank Beaven, and others less successful. The *Saturday Evening Post* once commissioned an article on the phenomenon, "The Sugar Crick School of Art."

Associating with these pros, I learned for the first time about syndicates, the foot in the door for anyone hoping for a career in comics. Even so, when my own big break came later with United Features I failed to appreciate my good fortune and was not particularly downcast when that foot in the door failed to push it open.

In my senior year I had taken a new room-mate and we shared the luxury of a tiny suite, which I retained after graduation. The owners of the residence were a sedate, colorless couple, but their son was a fascinating character. His mother abhorred nicknames, and, to prevent his ever being designated by one, she had christened him Gilloyd. In high school, alas, he acquired the sobriquet "Stick" and was never referred to by any other name.

Stick was a widower with one small son. He was a scientist by training and something of a genius by birthright. He played a number of musical instruments and was an omnivorous reader. Player pianos were popular in those days and, intrigued by the perforated rolls, he once spent days laboriously cutting proper interstices with a razor blade in a roll of wrapping paper. It didn't sound like Paderewski at the keyboard but the tune was recognizable.

Grieving for his dead wife, he became deeply involved in spiritualism, attending seances and averred that he talked with her. He made his own version of a ouija board and spent hours crouched over it, getting what he insisted were messages from beyond.

He also was an expert at shooting craps and took many a dime from me and my impecunious fellow roomers.

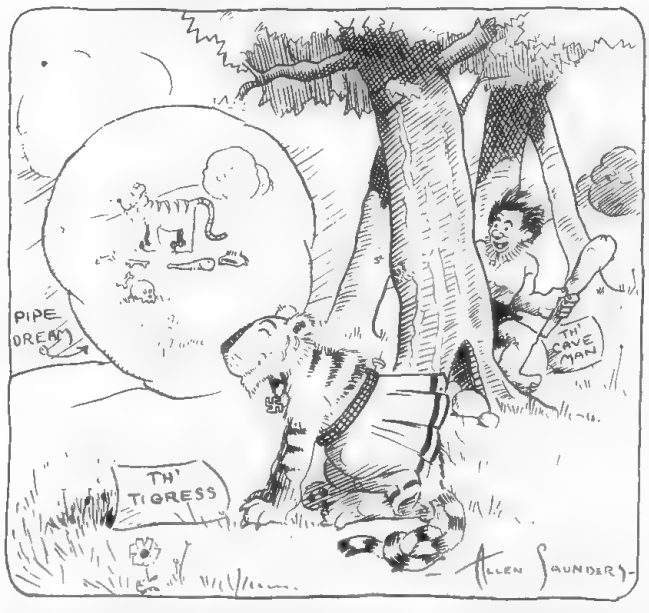
Having a living-room made it possible for me to spend time when I wasn't trying to keep ahead of my students, grinding out scores of cartoons, some of which sold to such obscure periodicals as the National Refining Company house organ and *Plumber's Monthly*. Impressed by the popularity of Kin Hubbard's *Abe Martin*, I created a rustic philosopher named Levi Zink and sold the series to *The Farm Journal*.

The most widely read humor panel in those days was "When a Feller Needs a Friend," by Clare Briggs. I turned out a shameless copy, "Miserable Moments," and sold it to United Feature Syndicate. Success, I felt now, was within grasp. But the syndicate's salesman were able to sign only a few newspapers and my feature died aborning. The compassionate manager of U.F.S. assured me that a price rise in newsprint had been to blame. And the *Farmer's Guide* bought the backlog of unpublished drawings—for $5 a piece.

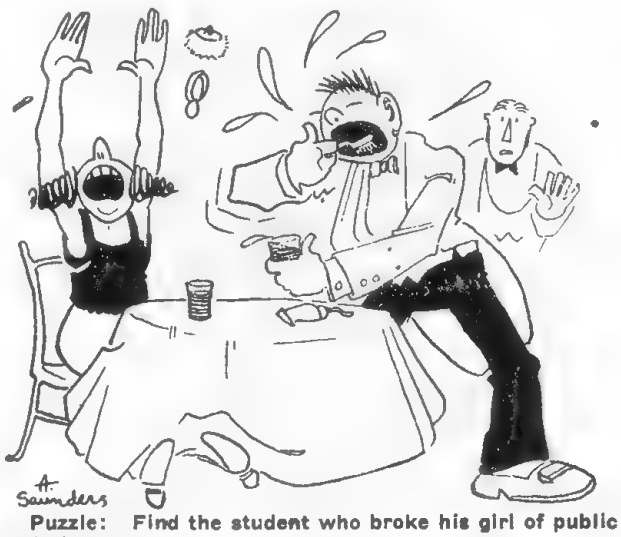
Some of the fly-by-night publications to which I sold cartoons proved to be poor credit risks. I was happy to see my efforts in print, but no loan-shark enforcer was ever more determined than I when it came to squeezing blood out of publication turnips. On one occasion, when a sleazy humor magazine used a number of my drawings without paying, I bought penny post cards, a dozen of them. On the first one I typed a courteous note, politely calling attention to the fact that they had, unintentionally, no doubt, failed to send a check for my contributions. There was no reply. I mailed a second card. It was polite, but firm—and brought no acknowledgment. Furious, I grabbed my brush and on each of the remaining ten cards I printed a demand that the debt be immediately settled. The message on the first card was in small type, growing progressively larger. The last one, in brushed printing inches high, screamed "WHY DON'T YOU PAY YOUR HONEST DEBTS, YOU CROOKS? I'M GOING TO SUE YOU!"

I mailed a card each day. There was never a response. I mentioned my chagrin to an attorney friend. "You're lucky not to be called into court," he informed me. "Sending that sort of material through the mail on a postcard is a criminal offense."

The Hunting Season Opens



The cartoons in the previous installment and this chapter are from Saunders's student days, his first professional work, and syndicate attempts.



Puzzle: Find the student who broke his girl of public powdering.

Following the old slander that "Those who can't, teach", I held occasional cartooning classes in my tiny living room. Of the youths who attended, some had far more talent than their teacher and went on to professional careers. Their success inspired that national magazine article about "The Sugar Crick School of Art."

Crossing the campus one Spring day, I came upon a senior, Hal Brown, and the head of our economics department sprawled on the grass in animated conversation. "Professor Fagan and I are going to Europe together," Hall announced. "Why don't you come along?" I wrote for a passport that night.

Hal had convinced his father, an Indiana banker, that a year's study of French banking methods would fit him perfectly to take over the family business. This must stand, considering the archaic practices then typical of banking in France, as one of the greatest feats of persuasion in recorded history.

Since I was sailing at an earlier date than my fellow travelers, we agreed to meet in Toulouse, under the clock above the city gates, at noon on a selected date. We would then go down to Barcelona and see a bullfight. The outcome of this careful planning bore out Bobbie Burns's observation on mice and men.

The night before I sailed from New York, I met a man in a theater gallery who had just returned from two years in Touraine. He convinced me that I shouldn't bypass that province. Not only was the purest unaccented French spoken there, but a visit to France was incomplete if it failed to include the Chateau country.

Another change in the itinerary I had carefully laid out before leaving home involved delivering packages to the parents of Amelie LeTonquesse. She and her husband Paul, a World War I fighter pilot, had arrived in this country as a result of being misled by a girlfriend. The latter had married a doughboy and was living in Rensselaer, Indiana. She had sent back glowing descriptions of their ranch and urged the LeTonquesses to join them and share their prosperity. The invitation was eventually accepted, there being few well-paid positions open for ex-pilots in France.

At the immigration office in New York, Paul was asked, "Wotta you gonna do? Ya can't come in without a job." Paul's English was not perfect. He heard the insistently repeated question as "Where ya gonna go? Where ya gonna go?" So he made a valiant effort to give the name of his destination: "Rence-le-eer." The agent thought he was saying "Engineer!" . . . and he stamped the admission form.

When they arrived in Rensselaer, cruel disillusionment awaited them. Amelie's girlfriend had deceived them. The "ranch" was a small truck farm at the town's outskirts. Paul would wear no sombrero, punch no cattle. When I was introduced to him while visiting my relatives in Rensselaer he was a day laborer in a grain elevator. Later I helped him get a job teaching French in an Illinois girls' school.

When she learned that I was planning a trip to France, Amelie asked if I would take a few little presents to her parents in Cambrai, a request her Gallic charm made it impossible to refuse. The gifts were bulky and lavishly wrapped. They took up half the space in my one much-traveled suitcase. But I was happy to make room for them by throwing out my change of wardrobe. Delivering the gifts would give me a chance to spend time in a typical French home.

It was a sweltering day when I got off the train in Cambrai and asked a passerby how far it was to the Peudons' address. He said it was within easy walking distance. My informant must have been a professional athlete; I trudged more than two miles in the blistering sun and arrived at the Peudons' row-house dripping with sweat.

Amelie's mother met me with a wide smile, a hearty embrace and a torrent of French words of welcome. I begged for a drink of cold water. *"Ce qu'il vous faut c'est de la biere"* she insisted, and she set before me a huge bottle of beer, naturally cooled in the cellar and beaded with moisture, and a bowl of cookies. Although I had never tasted the brew that brought fame to Milwaukee, I drank and ate gratefully.

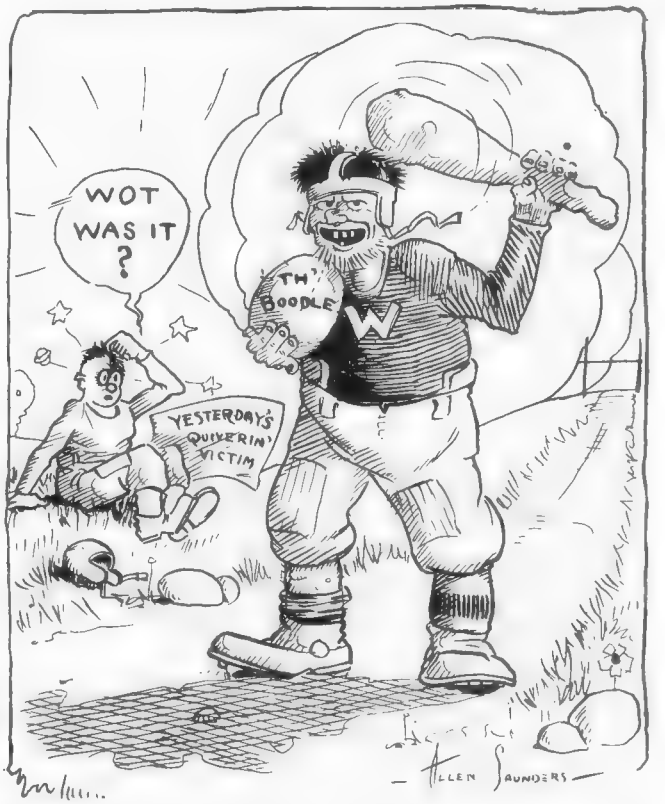
Soon we must go to meet Amelie's father, an insurance adjustor. He took me to his favorite bistro to meet three cronies and introduced me as "the young man who came to Cambrain, all the way from America, to bring us news of our daughter!" Asked what drink I wanted, I was stumped. I had grown up during Prohibition. The only liquor in our home was a half-pint bottle of blend whiskey in the medicine cabinet, its use strictly limited to the making of hot toddy for the treatment of colds. Even beer drinking was considered if not sinful at least daring. My first taste of alcohol had been on the ship coming over, when Masons in first class had invited us brothers in steerage to a cocktail party. A waiter had brought me a martini, which I thought tasted as gasoline might taste; I had poured it into a potted plant when my hosts were not looking.

Monsieur Peudon, a handsome, gracious host, suggested that I try a "Chambery fraise." I was surprised to find it as delectable as a strawberry soda. I drank four of them as the afternoon wore on.

At dinner, Madame Peudon asked if I preferred white wine or red wine. I begged for a glass of water and again was corrected. "What he wishes is to try *both* kinds!" After cheese and fruit, Mr. Peudon opened a cabinet, the shelves of which were loaded with assorted liqueurs, gifts from clients for whom he had settled insurance claims. I must try several of them to determine which I preferred.

When we left the table, my speech was slurred and my footwork unsteady. I longed to retire. But we must go calling on

The Anvil Chorus



neighbors who would want to meet Amelie and Paul's friend from *Les Etats-Unis*. We made a number of stops and at each one we were served crisp crepes, dusted with powdered sugar, and coffee laced with cognac.

Near midnight we started home. I wasn't walking, I was floating. My feet were cushioned on clouds. The world spinning around me was beautiful and I could reach and polish the stars. For the first time in my life I was drunk.

My host and I sat for a time in the garden and talked, about American history and my family and literature and politics. At last I groped my way upstairs and sprawled, fully dressed, on my bed, to fall asleep within seconds.

Mr. Peudon was waiting next morning to say goodbye before going to work. He seemed uncomfortable. He cleared his throat several times then spoke. "I think I should return to you the medal given to your grandfather for fighting *les Peaux-rouges*, the redskins." He held out his hand. On the palm was an Indian-head nickel.

I still wonder what fantastic boasting lie I must have told him that night in the garden.

Enjoyable and instructive though it was, my visit to Cambrai put me behind schedule. I gave Paris a fast once-over and entrained for Tours. During a layover in Orleans, which I took to see the Joan of Arc country, I apparently ate tainted steak for lunch and, continuing my journey in a third-class coach with no rest-room, I was seized with a violent case of what must have been ptomaine poisoning. In the Tours railway station I lurched off the train ahead of all the other passengers, abandoned my luggage, and raced for the facilities. The *"cabinet d'aisance"* contained no stools, only footholds on which I balanced myself dizzily. I came out weak and barely conscious, retrieved my suitcase and staggered across the square to take a room in the first hotel I came to. There I registered and went to bed.

Not only was I violently ill all night, I had unwelcome visitors—bedbugs. I ended up sleeping on the floor with a tasseled tablecover for a blanket and my leather puttees for a pillow. Next day I checked out and found a small, but immaculate, hotel and lost all track of the days as I lay in bed until the malady ran its course.

Eventually I was strong enough to dress and, as the calendar showed that the appointment with Hal and Professor

Fagan was only a day away, I walked to the center of town to get at least a curtailed impression of Tours.

The central square was filled with cafe tables where patrons sat nursing drinks and watching the silent movies projected on screens at each side of the enclosure. In the center of the massed tables was one of those large cylindrical metal structures where males retired for what the French euphemistically term *"le petit besoin,"* "the small need."

As I sat drinking chicory-flavored coffee and watching an old Tom Mix film, I saw a young man come out of the "pissoir". Two things told me he was not a native of France: he wore an American straw sailor and he had buttoned his fly before he came out. Even in the semi-darkness I recognized him.

I left my table and caught his arm. "Hello, Hal!" He whirled, faced me and broke into tears. "I. . . I've been trying for days

In the 1930s, cartoonist Bandel Linn paid tribute to a fellow Crawfordsville citizen who joined cartooning's ranks. The town produced a surprising number of cartoonists.

"Let's turn Allen Saunders' picture face out, Granpaw," gibes Linn. "He's quit teaching college and gone to work, cartooning."

to get a drink of cold water," he moaned. "Nobody understands Indiana French. Help me!"

After his protracted thirst had been quenched, we walked down to the bank of the Loire and had a long talk. He told me how he and the economics professor had quarrelled furiously in Paris and he had taken a train, picked at random, which brought him to Tours. And he had a proposal. His father had given him money to hire a tutor in French. Would I take the job?

We settled down in a small "pension," the Hotel Moderne, and both enrolled in extension courses given at the Lycee Descartes next door, where teachers were from the faculty of the University of Poitiers. Hal, who had earned a Phi Beta Kappa key, was the most apt pupil I ever had. We raced through *Fraser and Squair's Grammar* in one month and he was able to ask for his own drink of water, and complain if it wasn't cold enough, by the time we reached the last page.

We went on to Barcelona together, but it rained every day and I had to wait half a century to see my first bullfight.

He—"But if you married me you could live in a nice house."
She—"In an ice house! Be your age, silly; do I look like an Eskimo?"

Hal never became a banker in Frankfort, Indiana. He earned a doctor's degree at the University of Lyons and when he died was teaching French at Lehigh University.

The Hotel Moderne has become a frequent haven for the Saunders clan. Lois and I were married in 1923 and spent a belated honeymoon there after college closed. A dozen years later our son John and I stayed there. After he and Alice were married they paused on a tour of southern Europe to relax there. Lois and I, with my sister Evelyn and her husband Gene, sought out the inn a few years ago to sample the still excellent cuisine in the familiar dining-room. Finding the place wasn't easy, however. For some unexplained reason, the name of the street had been changed.

Our first honeymoon, following a ceremony in Crawfordsville, was a week-end trip to Chicago. After more than 50 years, Lois still reminds me that I devoted less time to her than to seeking cartoon markets. She sat for hours in a waiting room while I closed a deal to become the editorial cartoonist for *Tolerance*, the official anti-Ku Klux Klan publication.

My motives were not entirely mercenary. My father was, at the time, so outspoken against the Klan that he had to carry a

"How comes your wife takes orders from you so willingly?"
"Force of habit—she used to be a waitress."

club on the seat beside him when he drove out at night. I fervently hated everything the hooded zealots stood for and my drawings were savage in ridiculing them. The Klan's national publication, *The Fiery Cross*, ran a long article, sent to me in Europe, warning me not to come home. When I did return, some of my students muttered insults. The mail brought anonymous threats. An abortive attempt was made to get my teaching contract cancelled.

Association with *Tolerance* almost resulted in the realization of a boyhood dream. From my early teens, I had bought *Cartoons Magazine* every month. When Lois and I returned from Europe (paying our day-coach fare home with $50 borrowed from her cousin in New York) I learned with deep disappointment that the magazine had ceased publication during the summer. I communicated my sense of loss to the publisher of *Tolerance* in a telephone conversation.

"Would you like to edit a reborn version?" he asked. My affirmative shook the long-distance wires. "Good!," he continued. "My mother-in-law is quite wealthy. I'm sure she will put up the funds to buy the title from *Popular Mechanics* and launch *Cartoons* again, with you in charge. Come up tomorrow and we'll make plans."

I took the morning train to Chicago next day, unable to believe this stroke of good fortune. When I rang the bell at the publisher's apartment there was a long wait. I rang again. The door opened slowly, cautiously. The publisher seemed displeased at seeing me standing there. As I started to speak, he put a finger to his lips. "I can't talk now," he half-whispered. "At this moment, my mother-in-law is in there dying." And he gently closed the door.

I still hope *Cartoons Magazine* will someday be born again, even with somebody else in the editor's chair.

My last summer at the University of Chicago was almost aborted because of my weakness in simple arithmetic. Lois was packed to go stay with her parents and my taxi had been ordered when I decided to go over the family finances once more. To my consternation I discovered that pay checks from Wabash would be not two months, but three months, apart.

Frantic calculation while the cab waited showed that our budget allowed for everything but my food. So, at my patient wife's insistence, I went ahead as planned. All summer I ate on an average expenditure of 30 cents a day. And I lost 30 pounds. This was definitely no cause for alarm. I had weighed

A cartoon by Saunders for the national anti-KKK magazine *Tolerance*. In the 1920s, it took daring to declare such views openly.

203 pounds when I left our apartment.

Our first child, a son, was born in 1924 by Caesarian section. John Philip was small and shrunken, with a wrinkled face that made him look life a miniature edition of my father. But we thought he was beautiful.

Lois stopped working to devote herself to motherhood, after holding jobs as a bookstore clerk and later as secretary to the college director of alumni affairs. Losing her salary called for the reorganization of our budget and I spent more time at the typewriter and drawing-board after classes, conveniently scheduled in the morning.

I even tried selling office supplies, including pencils with stamped advertising on them, in the counties surrounding Crawfordsville. Within weeks I had discovered that I probably was the inspiration for that line about inability to peddle fur coats in Antarctica. I did bring in a meager, but regular salary, however, as an actor on the Chautauqua circuit one season.

I had two offers of other employment while I taught at Wabash. The first came from a publisher of textbooks. The recompense was good, but I turned it down. I would have spent eight months on the road selling, three in the firm's New York headquarters, and would have had one month free to spend with Lois and John.

The second job offered was that of teacher in a Middle Eastern University. I was tempted. Years spent in an exotic setting would be interesting. But Lois dissuaded me. As I scan today's headlines I realize that woman's intuition is not a myth. The site of the university was the city of Beirut.

As the years passed I grew more and more dissatisfied with teaching, a profession I had never intended to follow. I was selling cartoons and magazine fiction with some regularity and I longed to get back into journalism.

When seven years in the classroom entitled me to a sabbatical leave, I sought out the college president and told him I was taking it.

"Where are you planning to work on your doctorate?" he asked. "If you expect to advance in the academic world, you'll need more than your M.A. degree."

"I'm going to find a job on a newspaper," I replied. "If I like it, as I'm sure I will, I'll not return."

Before I left his office we had arranged for my replacement, the wife of the department head. She agreed to teach for $75 less a month than I was being paid and this amount would be sent to me for one year. It was not until I had crossed the campus and started the slow walk home that I realized what a rash step I had taken, what a gamble for a family man whose bank deposits were always in checking, never in savings.

There are no buildings on the Wabash campus bearing my name, but I did achieve that recognition, somewhat dubious in this case, as it applied to one small room. The rest-room for both teachers and students was a dark segment of the science building basement. It had no stalls. The commodes stood like porcelain mushrooms in a long row. At the first faculty meeting, I made an earnest plea for privacy. There was laughter as I sat down, but a storeroom was subsequently converted into a facility for faculty members.

It came to be known as "Saunders Memorial Hall." n

(To be continued...)

Penmen of the Past

Franklin Booth.

We can examine the work of Franklin Booth and, in a way, look both forward and back. We see striking similarities in style to at least one contemporary illustrator, but we notice too that his stunning pen-and-ink technique is a meticulous, reverential throwback to the finest days of woodcuts and steel engravings.

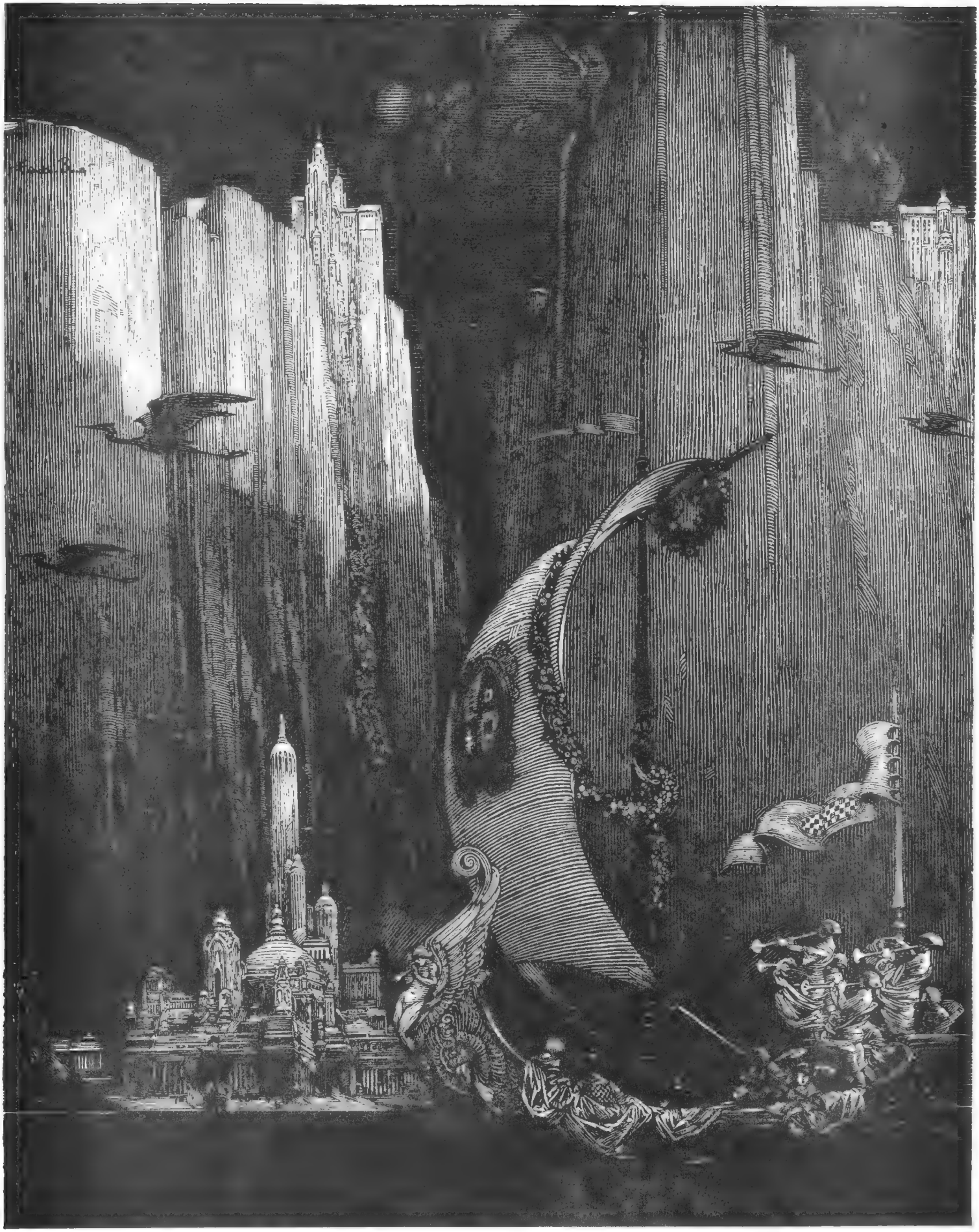
Booth, born on a farm in Indiana and spending his first 26 years there, admired the artists and illustrators of an earlier era, and studied their work as reproduced in woodcuts and engravings. He assumed thereby that the reproduction methods integral to those crafts (fine parallel lines, intricate cross-hatching, and the like) was how the artists drew on paper. So he taught himself to draw that way—and even in reproduction size!

The result of this naivete was a boon to his career and, ultimately, to art lovers who wonder at his amazing vision and technique. Although he had imitators, Booth stood alone; and, conversely, although his own style was clearly derivative, he yet stands as one of the most original and distinctive illustrators of his time or any time.

In spite of the eclectic nature of his inspirations, and in spite of the fact that much of his published work was advertising commissions, his themes were almost always in the fantasy realms. His subjects were ethereal, the compositions lordly. Allegorical themes were common throughout his career. Frequently borders and motifs played a large part in setting moods in his drawings: Franklin Booth was as much a decorative artist as a representational artist.

In addition to his advertising work, Booth illustrated books and even drew in color and black and white for the cartoon weekly *Life*. He lived from 1874 to 1948. —*Rick Marschall*

Collection of Rick Marschall



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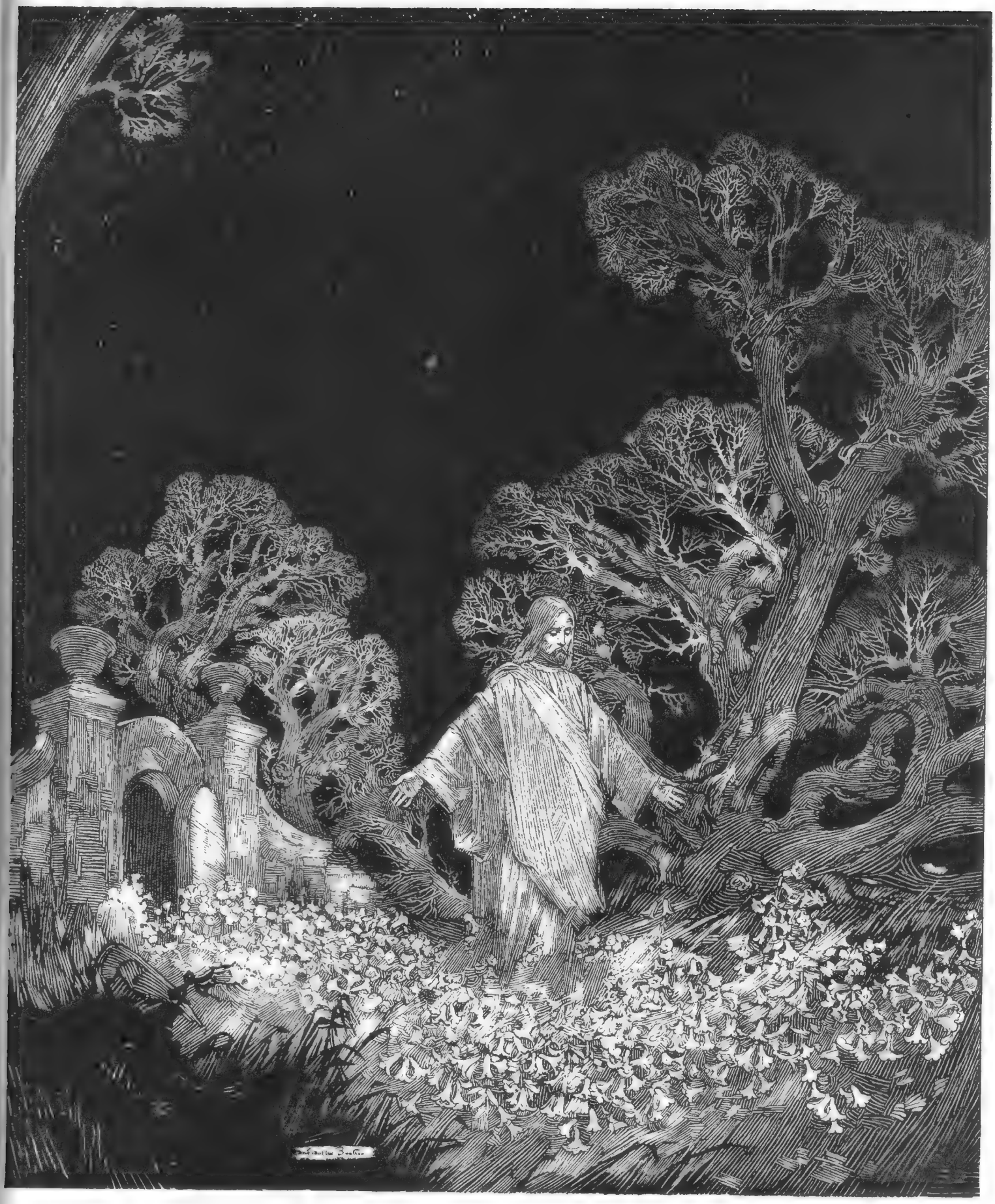
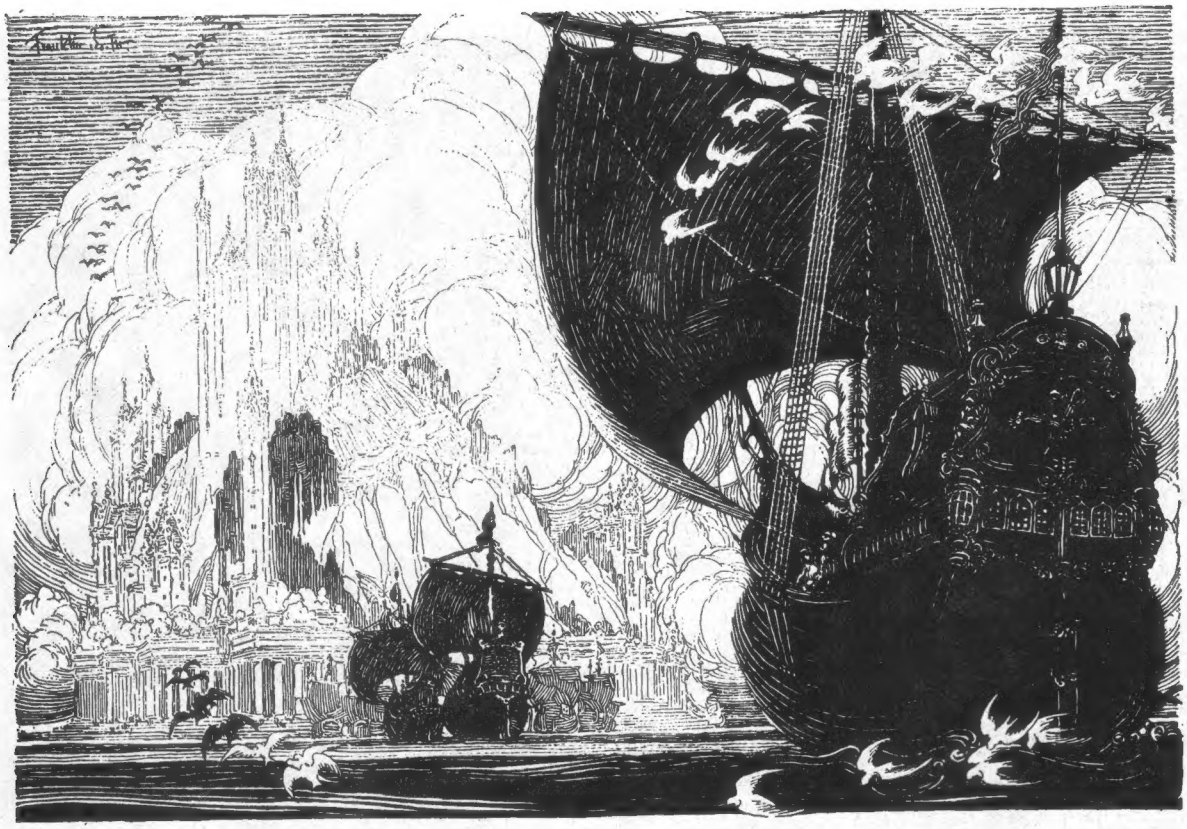
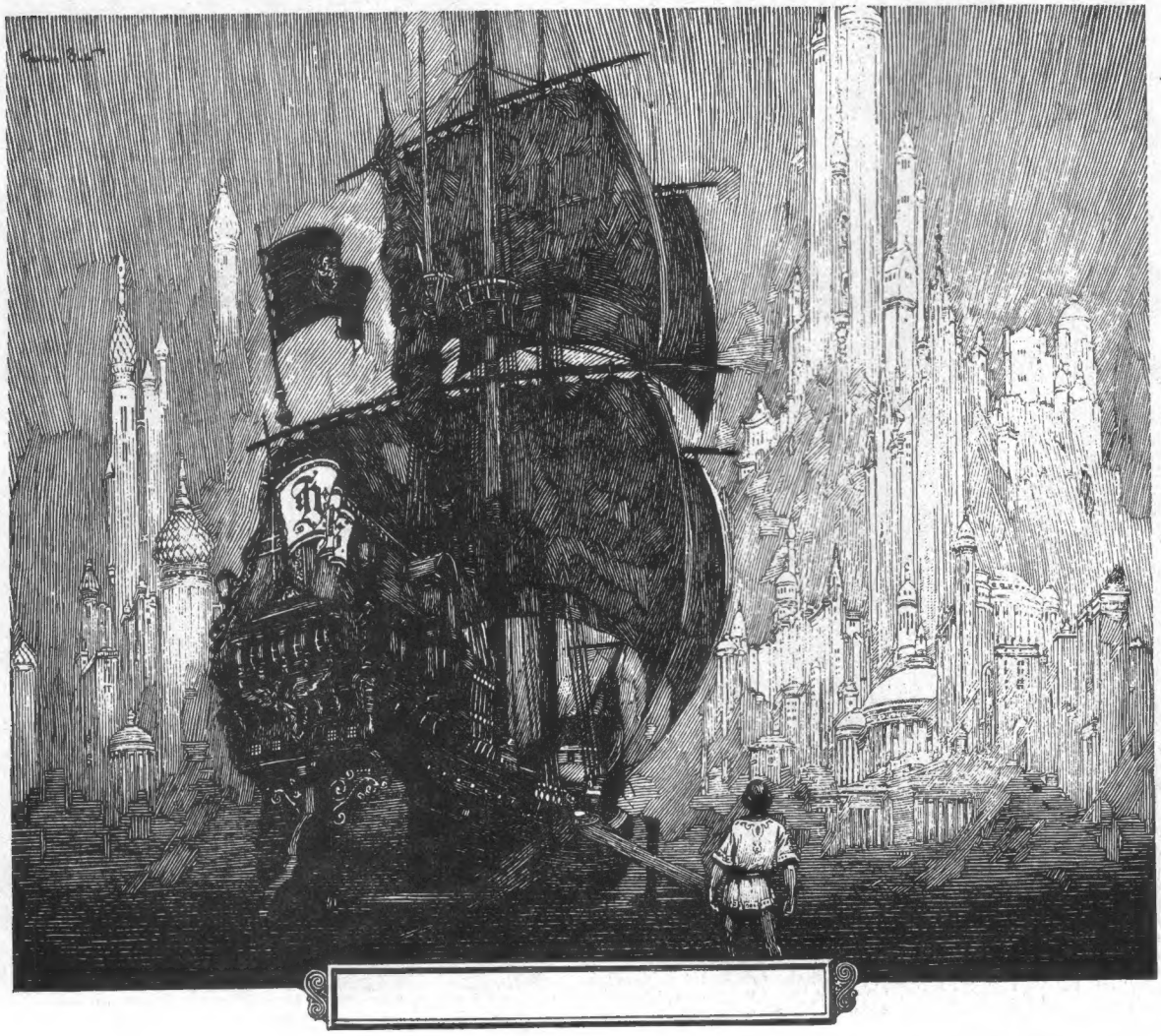
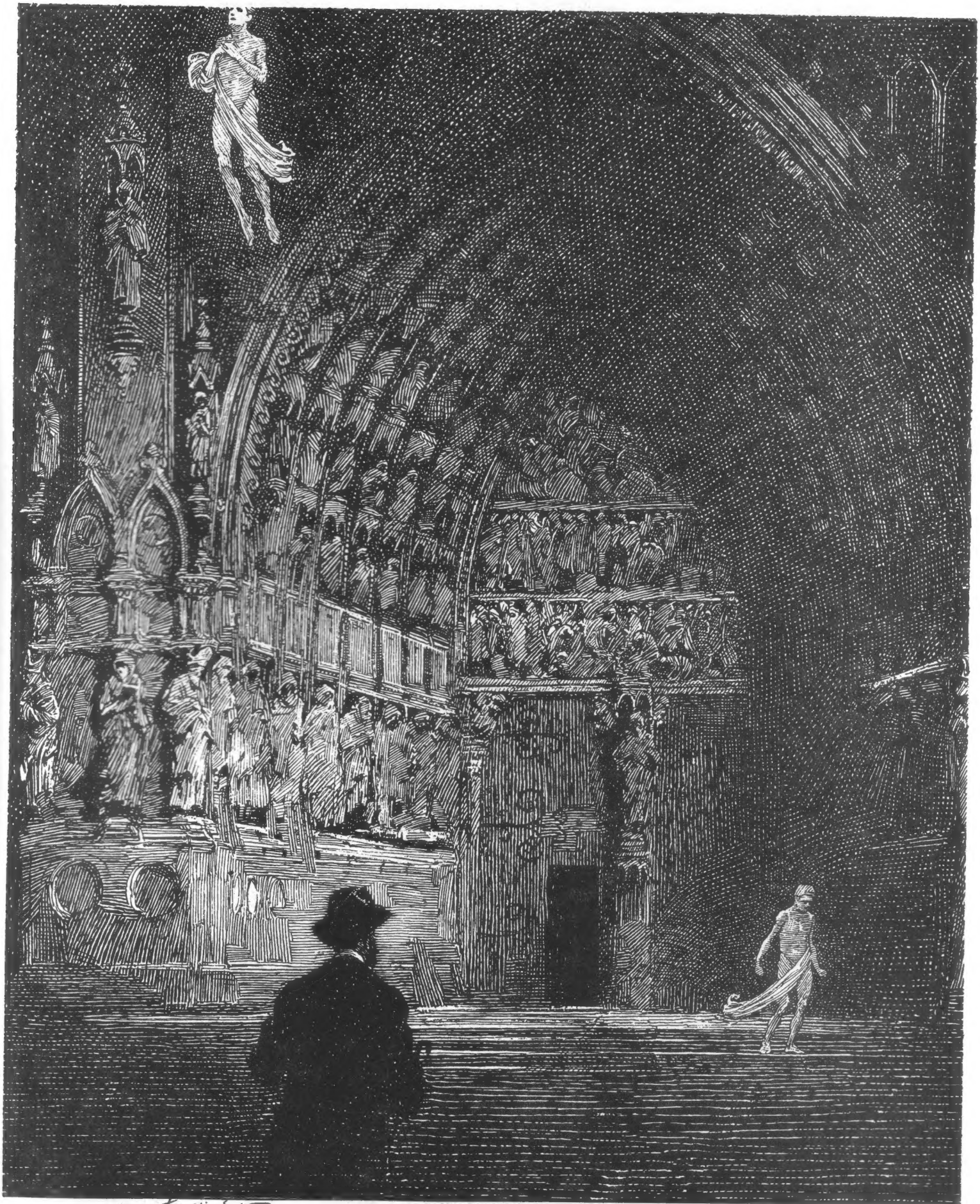
Adventure.









A Remembered Dream.